



Making Social Care
Better for People

inspection report

Fostering Services

Knowsley Council Fostering Service

Astley House

Astley Road

Huyton

Liverpool

Merseyside

L36 8HY

11th January 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

Knowsley Council Fostering Service

Address

Astley House, Astley Road, Huyton, Liverpool,
Merseyside, L36 8HY

Local Authority Manager

Mrs Terry Douglas

Tel No:

0151 489 6000

Address

Astley House, Astley Road, Huyton, Liverpool,
Merseyside, L36 8HY

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

Date of Inspection Visit		11th January 2005	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		10:00 am	
Name of Inspector	1	Mrs Lynn Paterson	073532
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		Terry Douglas	

Introduction to Report and Inspection

Inspection visits

Description of Fostering Service

Part A: Summary of Inspection Findings

Reports and Notifications to the Local Authority and Secretary of State

Implementation of Statutory Requirements from last Inspection

Statutory Requirements from this Inspection

Good Practice Recommendations from this Inspection

Part B: Inspection Methods & Findings

(National Minimum Standards For Fostering Services)

1. Statement of purpose

2. Fitness to carry on or manage a fostering service

3. Management of the fostering service

4. Securing and promoting welfare

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

6. Records

7. Fitness of premises

8. Financial requirements

9. Fostering panels

10. Short-term breaks

11. Family and friend carers

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

Part D: Provider's Response

D.1. Provider's comments

D.2. Action Plan

D.3. Provider's agreement

INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

Independent and local authority fostering services which fall within the jurisdiction of the 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 Knowsley 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.

Knowsley M.B.C. fostering service forms a part of the Children and Families division of the Local Authority Social Services Department.

The team holds an overall responsibility for the recruitment and assessment of foster carers, the provision of pre approval and post approval training and ongoing support of the carers and their families.

The team accommodation is situated at Astley House which is in a centralised position within the borough and has a training room and crèche facilities on the premises.

The fostering and adoption team comprise a team manager, 2 senior practitioners, 9 social workers, 3 of whom are part time, 1 full time and 5 part time administrative officers and 1 full time finance administrator. The inspector was advised that interviews were due to take place for an additional social worker to be appointed to the team.

The service was established to meet the needs of all looked after children between the age of 0 to 18 years residing in the Borough of Knowsley who have been assessed as requiring a foster placement, whether this be temporary foster care, short term breaks or permanence fostering.

The team provides the recruitment of foster carers and adopters, pre approval training, assessment of applicants, post approval training, supervision and support and monitoring and reviewing functions.

The objectives of the service include securing the provision of quality foster placements for looked after children within a safe, nurturing family when their own family cannot meet this need.

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.)

The inspection of Knowsley Fostering Service commenced on 11th January 2005 and continued until 20th January 2005. The inspection process involved examination of records, files, policies and procedures, comment cards, discussions with the registered manager, staff, young people, foster carers and other professionals who were associated with the fostering service. The inspector visited foster homes, toured the fostering service accommodation and generally utilised observational practices. The inspector also used case tracking methods in which a random sample of foster carers were chosen to focus on. All records relating to these people were inspected along with records pertaining to the children and young people placed in their homes. Foster carers and young people were invited to discuss their experiences of the fostering service.

Feedback and documentation perused indicated that foster carers felt supported and valued by members of the fostering team and young people stated no concerns whatsoever.

A summary of the information gained from the inspection is recorded below: -

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE.

The statement of purpose had been updated since the previous inspection and addressed all the requirements as set out in schedule 3 of The Fostering Service Regulations 2002. The children's guide contained sufficient information to enable children and young people to gain information about the service provision, however the inspector was advised that participation consultations are currently being undertaken to ensure that children and young people play a visible role to ensure that they are included in the preparation of all pertinent fostering service information.

FITNESS TO PROVIDE OR MANAGE A SERVICE.

The manager evidenced that she had vast knowledge of children and families and many years experience of working within a child-care arena. Records showed that she had managed the Knowsley Fostering and Adoption Team for the past 5 years. Staff files held information to show that the manager held both a professional social work and a social work management qualification. The inspector noted that the service appeared to be very well managed at the time of the inspection and feedback from staff evidenced that the manager was valued and respected in her role.

MANAGEMENT OF THE FOSTERING SERVICE.

Records indicated that the management team had put robust systems in place to monitor and control the activities of the service provision to include foster carers support groups, children/young people participation groups. All staff had job descriptions, foster carers held service level agreements and line management systems appeared clear and effective.

SECURING AND PROMOTING WELFARE.

Documentation viewed showed that new foster carers were approved only after a robust assessment had been carried out based on the competency level and assessments on file held full details to ascertain the suitability of foster carers and ensure that children and young people placed with them were appropriately matched wherever possible. The foster carers annual training program showed that carers received full training to provide them with the necessary skills with which to promote the children's health, education and emotional development. Child protection training was an ongoing process for staff and foster carers and the inspector noted that systems were in place to record child protection allegations and to commence the instigation of appropriate strategy meetings. The evidence gained showed that the fostering service had achieved full compliance in the promotion and safeguarding of children/young people.

RECRUITING, CHECKING, MANAGING, SUPPORTING & TRAINING STAFF & CARERS.

Records showed that the recruitment system in place for staff of the service was undertaken within Knowsley Local authority equal opportunity structures and overseen by the department's human resources team. Recruitment and approval of foster carers involved all the relevant checks being carried out as required by The National Minimum Standards. Staff and foster carers personal files held information to show that Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks were updated, as required. Documentation viewed indicated that the staff was managed in accordance with departmental guidelines including induction, supervision and performance review and development. Staff advised that they were afforded a high level of support and benefited from both formal and informal supervision. Foster carers stated that in general they felt well supported from the fostering service to include supervision, guidance and an excellent training program.

RECORDS.

The inspector viewed a sample of records pertaining to foster carers and looked after children and noted that they were generally well maintained and stored as appropriate.

FITNESS OF PREMISES FOR USE AS A FOSTERING SERVICE.

The fostering and adoption team operated from a premises which was situated in the Huyton area of Knowsley and this position appeared to be a central point and fairly accessible via public transport. The building provided accommodation for a fostering and adoption team and also administrative support. The premises was in the process of a much needed update and the inspector was advised that it was envisaged that the accommodation would be extended in the very near future and would include a crèche, a meeting room and extra toilet facilities. Currently the premises have very limited space with which to provide training and meetings and alternative premises are utilised for panel and review meetings. It is anticipated that the imminent refurbishment will enable the premises to be utilised for all aspects of the fostering and adoption service. The premises should then be adequate for the stated purpose.

FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS.

The service formed part of a local authority and was funded accordingly. The inspector

persued budgets, which evidenced that the service was appropriately funded for its purpose. Foster carers interviewed stated that in general they were satisfied with the payment system, however there appeared to be some carers who were unhappy with the newly developed skills payment in which foster carers were assessed as being on a payment scale of 1 to 4 with the payment system being structured accordingly. This issue was discussed with the service manager who advised that each foster carer had been given an opportunity to discuss their concerns although clear guidelines were in existence to include full information about the implementation of skill based payments and how carers can achieve a higher level of payment by way of enhancing their knowledge and skills.

FOSTERING PANELS.

Documentation showed that the panel meet on a monthly basis with pre meeting information being distributed to panel members 3 days prior to the meeting. Panel members interviewed stated that the panel was well organised and was managed most effectively by the panel chairperson.

SHORT TERM BREAKS.

Records showed that the service utilised a small number of carers who had specific approval to provide short term breaks to meet the assessed need of families and as a support to parents who retain parental responsibility.

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:

YES

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:

The inspection process identified that Knowsley Local Authority fostering service satisfied regulatory requirements.

Implementation of Statutory Requirements from Last Inspection

Requirements from last Inspection visit fully actioned?

NO

If No please list below

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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

No.	Regulation	Standard	Required actions	
1	23	FS26	The premises currently used as accommodation for the fostering and adoption team do not appear appropriate for its stated purpose	4.4.05

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		

**Regulation
Inspector**

Lynn Paterson

Signature

Second Inspector

Signature

**Regulation
Manager**

Lorraine Maguire

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	22	FS24	The service must ensure that records are maintained and managed as per the service policy and procedure.	3.3.05
2	23	FS26	The service must ensure that the accommodation used is appropriate for its stated purpose.	4.4.05.

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

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	NO
Foster carer survey	YES
Foster children survey	YES
Checks with other organisations and Individuals	
• Directors of Social services	NO
• 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	YES
Observation of foster panel	YES
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Interview with individual child	YES
Date of Inspection	11/01/05
Time of Inspection	10.00AM
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	60

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?

3

The inspector read the statement of purpose and noted that it had been reviewed and amended since the previous inspection. The statement held clear information pertaining to the aims and objectives and services and facilities provided. Staff interviewed advised that they had held meetings to discuss the revision of the statement of purpose and that all staff had contributed their views as to the format required. Records indicated that the statement of purpose was available to children, young people and foster carers via the web site. Social workers advised that they were also able to access the statement of purpose electronically and part of their remit was to discuss the purpose and functioning process of the agency and the role of carers when planning the young persons accommodation.

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?

4

The inspector met with the team manager and the management team and viewed the pre inspection questionnaire to gain evidence for this standard. The manager evidenced that she had extensive experience in a number of settings within a child-care arena and had a wide knowledge of the business and management skills utilised by Local Government. The manager held a professional social work and a management qualification. The deputy manager/senior practitioner held appropriate professional qualifications and also had achieved her NVQ level 4 in Management. During the discussions, the manager and deputy demonstrated that they had worked together to develop the fostering service and this was evidenced by updated policies, procedures, training and payment systems. Both demonstrated commitment to their roles, responsibilities and levels of accountability in relation to their work. Staff interviewed stated that the manager was a very effective leader who organised and managed with transparency and empowerment. The inspector noted the efficient and effective management style utilised was most commendable and has therefore awarded a marking of 4 to reflect this.

Standard 3 (3.1 - 3.4)

Any persons carrying on or managing the fostering service are suitable people to run a business concerned with safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The inspector met with management and staff and perused records and documentation to gain evidence for this standard. The manager exhibited strong professional knowledge and understanding of the mechanisms involved with protection issues to include safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The inspector observed the service arranging and contributing to child protection strategy meetings during the inspection. Records indicated that the service dealt with these issues appropriately and positively. Staffing records appeared robust with reference checks being recorded and police checks being carried out and renewed as appropriate. Training records also showed that child protection training was as ongoing process within the service via the Departmental training programme.

Management of the Fostering Service

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- The fostering service is managed ethically and efficiently, delivering a good quality foster care service and avoiding confusion and conflicts of role.

Standard 4 (4.1 – 4.5)

There are clear procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of the fostering service and ensuring quality performance.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The inspector met with staff and viewed policies, procedures and other documentation to gain evidence for this standard. Staff advised that they had clear job descriptions and they received regular supervision to include workload management issues. Staff also advised that they received ongoing training in line with their continuous personal development and were afforded valuable advice and support from their line managers.

Records showed that the service had a number of systems in place with which to monitor and control the activities and the manager identified that she held responsibility for the quality control functions of assessments, files and recruitment and selection. Documentation pursued pertaining to administrative systems showed that the monitoring and controlling of the throughput of information, payments to carers, panel files, form F assessments, records of carers and looked after children was very well managed.

The inspector observed foster carer support groups and training events and was advised that children's groups were also arranged. Staff advised that consultations and questionnaires were utilised to ensure that these services could be measured as appropriate.

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

0

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.

X

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.

X

Serious complaint about a foster parent.

X

Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.

X

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

0

Number of the above complaints which were substantiated:

0

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

4

The manager held a job description, which was clear and set out duties and responsibilities and identified her powers of delegation and accountability. Staff advised that the manager displayed high quality management skills and that she was efficient and effective in her role.

The senior practitioner also held a job description that advised of her role and staff of the service in interview demonstrated an awareness of their respective roles and levels of accountability.

The senior practitioner deputised in the manager's absence and also held responsibility for some staff supervision.

Both the manager and senior practitioner had vast experience of working in the child-care arena and held professional social work and management qualifications. Verbal feedback, information from comment cards and general observations of management style and staff interactions evidenced that the management of the service was commendable.

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

Documentation viewed showed that assessments of foster carers was undertaken by social work staff who completed a detailed assessment over an agreed period of time prior to the carers being approved. This assessment was then verified by a second person to ensure that the paperwork was complete. Files reviewed also held details to show that a health and safety check had been carried out on the foster carers house prior to placement and a foster carers handbook had been provided to give ongoing help and advice.

Foster carers interviewed advised that they received announced and unannounced visits from their social worker's details of which they knew were recorded on file.

Foster carers also advised that they received extensive pre approval training that included safe care and as a consequence in general had a good understanding of their responsibilities in this area.

The inspector visited several foster homes during the inspection and met with foster carers and their families and noted that all carers displayed full understanding of promoting and safeguarding young people and all homes visited appeared totally appropriate for the placement of looked after children.

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

Pre approval training records identified that the fostering service took the issues of diversity seriously. Training was arranged to ensure that systems were in place to screen the suitability of potential carers both initially and as an ongoing process. The pre assessment process was also devised to ensure that any areas of concern could be aired prior to the application being presented to panel.

Panel records showed that the meetings were well organised and structured so that all applicants could be suitably scrutinised and any issues discussed before the application was approved.

The inspector noted that the equal opportunity policy addressed the issues of diversity and staff and foster carers interviewed stated that they had received training in respect of race, equality and children's rights.

All staff and foster carers interviewed during the inspection evidenced that they worked together to enhance the young persons self esteem and acquire a positive identity.

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

Agency documentation stated that promoting and respecting diversity was a major consideration in the matching process and the inspector noted that matching considerations were given high priority at the Accommodation Panel. Social workers advised that they utilised their knowledge base of carer's strengths when considering matching. Documentation viewed showed that an electronic system was in place that held up to date information about carers and their current situation and staff advised that this greatly assisted them to access appropriate placements. Staff interviewed advised that they worked with the relevant policies and procedures in place to match children and young people with carers however this was not always possible especially with emergency placements. The inspector visited foster carers who advised that they understood the matching process and that they were generally given sufficient background information to enable them to make an informed choice about " their suitability to provide appropriate care". However they advised that on occasions in an emergency they had provided short term accommodation which had turned out to be inappropriate to the needs of the looked after child. Foster carers evidenced that they were active in the facilitation of contact between looked after children and their birth families and held full knowledge of their own responsibilities in their foster carers role.

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

Documentation viewed to gain evidence for this standard included policies and procedures pertaining to child protection, bullying, whistle blowing, unauthorised absence, allegations against carers and safe care. Foster carers interviewed advised that they found these policies and protocols to be clear and easy to understand and that pre approval and post approval training had been provided to ensure, where ever possible, that all children were protected from abuse. Foster cares further advised that they had been provided with a foster carers handbook, which held valuable information and advice and that safe care was taught by training officers and practiced within all foster homes.

Staff stated that they had received training robust training in child protection and the inspector noted that the service maintained child protection records and processes to a high standard.

Records showed that looked after children in foster care were encouraged to have regular contact with their birth families, their own social workers and other professionals connected with their daily life. Young people spoken with advised that they were not isolated and were given information in their children's guide and the agency statement of purpose as to how they could report any concerns.

Discussion with the management team highlighted that a restraint policy was in place, however it was in the process of update to ensure that it was backed by a behavioural management procedure to evidence a well - balanced process was in place where restraint was only utilised as a last resort. Staff advised that the systems of assessment and approval was thorough and ongoing, Criminal Records Bureau checks were completed every 2 years and the service had robust methods of supervising and reviewing carers as measures to further protect children and young people from abuse.

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

Documentation viewed identified that contact was agreed in the court process and /or the care management process and written into the child's/young persons care plan. The manager advised that the service aimed to provide placements where siblings could have contact with each other and that foster cares were approved only if they could evidence their commitment to the child and their respective family.

Foster carers stated that they had received training on contact and the impact this can have on a child's behaviour and most carers said that they had facilitated contact either in their own homes or other community venues to include family centres as per the need of the child.

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

The inspector noted that the children's guide had been updated and held details of how to and with whom to consult. Staff advised that young persons were encouraged to attend their core group and review meetings, as the decisions made at those meetings would directly affect them. Staff also stated that each young person had support from their social worker to enable them to discuss any issues that may affect their daily life. Staff stated that KATY and other group work schemes facilitated forums where looked after children could discuss their feelings about the services in general and the professionals working in these settings would feedback as appropriate.

Young people's completed questionnaires held information that evidenced they felt they had been consulted about their opinions and ideas and that they were able to make decisions about their daily living, wherever possible. The returned questionnaires also indicated that the young people understood the complaints system and the mechanisms involved.

The revised foster carer review forms now held a children's contribution section, which young people perceived to be a positive move towards their views being heard.

Staff advised that the Children and Young Persons Strategic Partnership had sanctioned the use of Participations Standards devised by the Children's fund. The standards were to be measured against set criteria and services kite marked accordingly. It was envisaged that the Fostering Service would be one of the first to be assessed and the learning from this process would be fundamental to enhancing performance.

Foster carers advised that they were consulted and listened to by the fostering service and that the fostering service social workers visited regularly and met with both the foster carer and the young person although they stated that it was not the full responsibility of the foster service staff to engage with the young person in the same way as the young persons allocated social worker.

The manager advised that parents and other significant people were consulted over decisions affecting their children by way of the care planning process, attending core groups and review meetings and interaction with social work staff.

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

The inspector looked at case records and spoke with agency staff and foster carers to gain evidence for this standard. Records evidenced that all looked after children in foster care had an in-care medical at the time of placement and staff advised that medical assessments would be an ongoing process.

Case files held information to advise that the looked after children's nurse monitored and reviewed areas of health surveillance to include dental care, immunisations and eye tests. Carers advised that they had received training in health and hygiene, health and safety and first aid and that other training was available in respect of sexual health, drug awareness and HIV and AIDS. Carers also advised that they had knowledge and understanding of the role of the looked after children's nurse and found her services to be supportive.

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

Staff interviewed advised that all foster carers received pre and post approval training on educational matters and that specialist teachers were employed by the Division to support all looked after children in foster care placements.

Foster carers advised that specialist teachers were able to negotiate with schools and organise additional tuition and assist with necessary educational equipment and generally provide support for both the carer and the young person.

Young people advised that they had personal educational plans, which were monitored by the designated educationalists; they were provided with computers to assist them to attain information and knowledge and received ongoing support from their foster carers and the education service.

Standard 14 (14.1 - 14.5)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The inspector spoke with staff and foster carers and read documentation to include comment cards and case files to gain evidence for this standard.

Foster carers advised that they had received pre and post approval training pertaining to the preparation of young people to gain skills as appropriate to independent living and received ongoing support in this area from their social workers.

Staff advised that all young persons 16 years and above were transferred to the Leaving Care Team in order for their Pathway and Care Plans to be focused on their future adult needs.

Staff advised also that all foster carers who were involved in the care of young people had received training to assist them to engage with the young person in self-care skills, budgeting, education and in moving on to alternative accommodation.

The inspector noted that the remit of the Leaving Care Team was a positive commitment to providing guidance and support for all young persons who were 16 and above to prepare them for independence and adult life.

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 inspector met with management and staff and foster carers and perused documentation to include pre inspection questionnaire, recruitment and selection policies and procedures, staff files and training records to gain evidence for this standard. The recruitment and selection process was a corporate local authority process, which was seen to be fair and equal and the inspector was able to view the pre selection protocols as a staff vacancy had been advertised and the selection process was taking place at the time of the inspection. Records showed that Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks had been carried out for staff and foster carers and the inspector noted that these records were maintained in line with data protection legislation.

Staff files held details pertaining to experience and qualifications held by the staff of the agency and showed that all staff had a professional social work qualification and were experienced in their role to support and train foster carers.

The manager advised that the health and education workers were also fully qualified to carry out their remit and held full understanding of the issues involved in working with children and families.

Total number of staff of the agency:

X

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

1

Standard 16 (16.1 - 16.16)

Staff are organised and managed in a way that delivers an efficient and effective foster care service.

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

The inspector met with management and staff and pursued documentation to gain evidence for this standard. Staff advised that they received formal supervision on a regular basis, which was pre arranged, time limited and took place in privacy away from the daily distractions of the main office. The supervision process incorporated workload issues, performance management and personal development and support. The manager advised that she was responsible for the recruitment and selection of staff as per local authority protocols. The manager also advised that line management and support systems were in place to ensure that information and advice could be shared and that all staff were managed in accordance with Departmental Guidelines to include induction, supervision and performance review and development.

The office administration was carried out by 1 full time and 5 part time administrators who provided support to the team and when interviewed they advised that they were keep very busy but felt well supported by the fostering and adoption social workers. The inspector noted that a financial administrator was also employed in the service and records evidenced that he managed and maintained the financial records to a good standard.

All staff interviewed were able to advise that they enjoyed the work environment in which the management team were approachable supportive and honourable.

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**

Records showed that one social worker had left the team since the previous inspection and one new worker had been appointed in his place. All team members interviewed exhibited full knowledge and understanding of their remit and advised that they held a professional social work qualification.

Foster carers returned comment cards and open discussions gave most positive feedback about the service in general and the good levels of support provided by their link social workers. Foster carers stated that they were happy with the level of intervention from their link workers but were disappointed with the level of support from the children/young peoples social workers as they felt that they abdicated some of their responsibilities with information sharing and home visits.

The manager advised that the recruitment and selection of foster carers was a robust process in which all relevant vetting processes were carried out alongside the assessment to include the completion of BAAF form F.

Documentation viewed showed that the manager held responsibility for monitoring the assessments and for the distribution of the relevant paperwork to the fostering panel.

Staff advised that they were able to fulfil their remit due to strong workload management systems and good support systems within the team although they stated that they continue to have insufficient carers to meet all of Knowsley's looked after children's needs despite robust recruitment strategies.

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**

The inspector met with staff and foster carers and read documentation to include personnel policies and procedures, out of hours duty roster, health and safety and whistle blowing policies to gain evidence for this standard.

The inspector noted that all relevant policies were included in both the staff and foster carers handbook.

Staff interviewed showed that they had viewed the policies and understood the content therein.

Foster carers advised that they had been encouraged and supported to attend training and as a consequence they too had understanding of all relevant policies and protocols.

Documentation showed that out of hours support was offered through The Emergency Duty Team and foster carers own out of hours support scheme, which the inspector was advised had been in place for the past three months and was working well. However some carers advised that they had been unable to access assistance from the emergency duty service as the staff utilised by this service worked on a crisis intervention system and the carers request for assistance was not deemed high priority or a crisis. This was addressed with the team manager during the inspection and she advised that the service was introducing an out of hours support system which would be staffed by people who were experienced in the care of looked after children.

The service formed part of a local authority and was subject to public liability and professional indemnity insurance to cover all staff and foster carers.

Staff and foster carers interviewed said that they felt that the service was well managed and provided a good level of support and training.

Standard 19 (19.1 - 19.7)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

4

The inspector met with staff and foster carers and read documentation pertaining to training to include annual training programme and foster carers training records and noted that the training provided was most varied to include both mentoring and coaching systems. Foster carers advised that they were provided with a thorough induction process and ongoing training, which they perceived to be most interesting and informative. Training records showed that the training program was robust and varied and the inspector observed training sessions and found them to be well organised with the contents being well presented and most relevant. Observational methods and discussions with foster carers further evidenced that the participants of the sessions were mixed between foster carers and agency staff and interactions were good. Foster carers advised that this system enhanced the existing liaison between carers and social work staff.

Pre inspection questionnaire held information that there were 502 attendances for post approval training and 81 attendances at preparation training within the last year.

All carers advised that they had received training in safe care, child protection, separation and loss and valuing diversity.

Records showed that staff was able to utilise the continuous self- development system to include achieving NVQ4 management and PQ1 social work awards.

Verbal feedback from foster carers, information gained from questionnaires and other documentation and general observations highlighted that the service had been extremely proactive in their pursuits of providing relevant quality training, which people found to be useful, interesting and well presented. The inspector found this to be most commendable to the service and the training personnel involved.

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)

All staff are properly accountable and supported.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

4

The inspector met with staff and management and pursued supervision and appraisal documentation, staff files and team meeting minutes to gain evidence for this standard. Staff interviewed stated that they were properly accountable and supported and held full written details of the duties and responsibilities expected of them. Staff files held information to confirm that job specifications and policies and procedures of the organisation had been provided to staff.

Staff advised that formal supervision was in place, which included practice, training and support issues and workload management. Staff advised that they welcomed supervision, which was held on both a formal and informal basis was recorded and signed by the supervisor and supervisee.

Minutes seen showed that staff meetings took place on a regular basis and involved all team members.

During the inspection the inspector observed that the team manager utilised an open door policy in respect of support and advice and it was apparent that this system was used as a support mechanism for all the staff, who advised that the manager was valued as “ an honourable and supportive leader who never let them down” .

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**

Foster carers files held information to evidence that foster care agreements were in place that had been amended to reflect the current legislation, to include the additional that all foster carers must co-operate with the Commission.

Foster carers advised that they held regular support meetings that were held at Astley House and were included in all discussion and consultations about the mechanisms involved with the service. They also stated that they understood the remit of their supervising social worker to include their commitment to the overall training needs of the foster carers to ensure the needs of each child was met.

Records showed that foster carers annual reviews were undertaken with the reports being prepared and presented to panel and file records showed that the link social worker visits were carried out according to policy

Foster carers spoken with and responses gained from questionnaires evidenced that the supervising social workers were generally highly regarded for their support however some comments were made about the poor service received from the looked after children's social workers to include irregular visiting, lack of shared information and general inconsistency of practice.

Staff advised that they attempted to have effective communication systems with the placing social workers although this was not always possible. It was suggested therefore that a system should be used to ensure that need to know information could be passed on electronically to ensure effective joint working practices were in place to include the sharing of information.

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 inspector met with management, staff and foster carers and viewed documentation to include foster carers agreement, foster-carers handbook and foster carers files to gain evidence for this standard.

Foster carers agreements contained full information in respect of what was expected from the carer and carers interviewed advised that they had full understanding of their remit. File records showed that the supervising social worker worked in accordance with agency policy to ensure that each carer was provided with sufficient support and supervision to provide high quality care.

Foster carers stated that they found the service to be supportive and the supervising social workers to be helpful and approachable.

The foster carers handbook contained policies, procedures and general information pertaining to complaints and contacts and foster carers advised that they found this to be a useful reference point.

The inspector noted that records pertaining to allegations of abuse were maintained and monitored by the team manager.

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**

The inspector noted from discussion and documentation that the service had reviewed the training strategy for foster carers and had further developed the training programme. Records showed that individualised training and development plans were being provided for all foster carers to ensure wherever possible that individuals received training appropriate to the identified need of the child. Foster carers interviewed told the inspector that they received a varied training selection both pre and post approval although they had to undertake certain training which was mandatory.

The training programme appeared structured to provide pre and post approval training and included safe care, child protection, effective communication, behaviour-management, valuing diversity and separation and loss. Pre approval training covered a 4-day period and although they were primarily arranged for new applicants, they proved very useful for carers who wished to refresh or update their knowledge. The inspector noted that experienced foster carers took part as co leaders in the pre approval training. The inspector observed some in house training pertaining to drugs and alcohol and the unborn child and also life story work and noted that staff and foster carers joined together in the training session in order to develop their knowledge base. The sessions were noted to be well managed, interesting and useful.

Carers interviewed advised that they were afforded good quality training with some training input being provided from foster carers themselves. However some carers advised that they felt that they had not been consulted about their individual learning styles and as a consequence some felt intimidated by a class- room situation and felt somewhat isolated. As training is now an attachment to skill based payments it would be useful if a learning style questionnaire were provided for all foster carers to enable them to make choices about the most appropriate training methods to suit individual need.

Records

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 24 (24.1 - 24.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
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The inspector spoke with management and staff and foster carers and read documentation to include files, records, policies and procedures and visited foster carers and young people in their homes as part of the case tracking methods to gain evidence for this standard. Foster carers advised that they understood why children and young people were placed with them and they stated that they had been given training prior to approval, which had provided them with clear insight into the legalities of the situation. Carers also advised that they were well supported by their supervising social workers who had provided them with background information pertaining to the child wherever possible. However some carers advised that the children's social worker did not always furnish sufficient background information or documentation about the child. Carers advised also that it was sometimes difficult to make contact with the children's social workers and messages were not always acted upon and it was then left to the supervising social worker to provide support. Records showed that the supervising social worker made regular visits to the carers and support was also provided from education and health professionals. The team manager advised that, as the fostering service was an integral part of the Children and Families Division, the children's records were easily accessible and as a consequence the service did not need to maintain records about children in placement other than the last review or care plan for the child. Observations at foster carers homes indicated that they had been issued with diaries and storage systems to record and store relevant information and the inspector noted that foster carers were in the process of receiving training in respect of life story work in which they were advised of the importance of keeping pictures and memorabilia pertinent to the child. Recording systems tested during the inspection appeared inconsistent with foster carers being unsure as to what was necessary to record and some file entries from supervising social workers not giving sufficient information pertaining to the visit. The inspector noted also that some record sheets were unsigned. This was identified to the team manager at the time of the inspection and will be noted as a requirement in this report

Standard 25 (25.1 - 25.13)

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

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

As stated previously in standard 24 the fostering service was an integral part of Children and Families Division and the service did not need to maintain records about children in placement, however staff could access the computerized database to gain information about carers and children and young people looked after. The inspector pursued documentation to include case files, records, policy and procedures in respect of storing and managing information and file retention, staff files, pre assessment documents and held discussions with management and staff and viewed the premises to gain evidence for this standard. The premises appeared secure with shutters and alarms on the window and door areas with a close circuit television to view and record the exterior. The filing systems and computers appeared to be secure with locks to the filing cabinets and password access only to the computers.

It was noted that records were stored in separate areas with staff files being held within personnel and carer records held with the fostering team. Panel records, finance records and review records were kept separately and discretely from others whilst the initial enquires spreadsheet, foster carers training program and data -base were kept on the computer. Carers files viewed as part of the case tracking method appeared well maintained and held all relevant information to include assessment, criminal records bureaux checks made on the foster carer and other significant members of the household and/or extended family. The children's register was computerised and held centrally and contained all the appropriate information including the child's address prior to placement, the date the child ceased to be placed with the foster carer and the address where the child was placed on leaving the placement. The foster carers register also fully complied with the Fostering Regulations 2002.

Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:

187

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

X

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

3

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

33

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

26

Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £

72.33

Maximum £

350

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 inspector viewed the premises and spoke with staff to gain evidence for this standard. It was noted that the service appeared to be ideally situated centrally in the borough although the office premises did not seem to afford adequate space for all the staff and various office equipment. The inspector observed some improvement to the premises since the last inspection to include a larger administration office and was advised that work was in progress to extend the area currently utilised for the fostering and adoption team. The service operated an open door policy to carers and had in house training and crèche facilities, however at the time of the inspection toilet facilities consisted of one toilet and wash- basin combined which was also used as a storage area. The office accommodation was alarmed and protected by CCTV and documentation identified that it was adequately insured. The team manager advised that extended accommodation was almost ready for the use 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?

3

The service formed part of a local authority and was funded accordingly and operated within financial regulations. Documentation viewed showed that the service had clear guidelines regarding payments and utilised a computerized payment system in respect of fostering allowances. The manager advised that she could access computerised information pertaining to financial position of the service or discuss any issues with the team financial administration assistant.

Standard 28 (28.1 - 28.7)

The financial processes/systems of the agency are properly operated and maintained in accordance with sound and appropriate accounting standards and practice.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The service formed part of a local authority and was operated and maintained in accordance with their financial systems.

Standard 29 (29.1 - 29.2)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The financial administration assistant held responsibility for the maintenance of the payment system and a computer system was also in place to assist this process. Documentation showed that carers received information annually regarding payments and have had further information relating to skill based payments to advise that the service had increased payments for those carers motivated enough to enhance their knowledge and skills. Carers had also been advised that financial support would end for those carers who will not attend training and cannot evidence their skills as carers.

Carers stated that currently the payment system worked well, however they expressed mix feelings about the skills based payment scheme, some stating that they felt it was an unfair process. Agency staff advised that this system had been introduced by way of full consultation with foster carers and all carers would be given an equal opportunity to achieve a payment level of their choice.

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

The fostering panel had clear policies and procedures in place and documentation viewed showed that all the panel members were experienced and committed to their remit. Protocols involved included details of the decision-making process involving approval/re-approval, refusal, review and decision-making.

Records showed that all panel members had undertaken Criminal Records Bureau Checks and had been provided with full details of the requirements of their role.

The panel was chaired by a senior manager, who in interview displayed extensive knowledge and understanding of the nature and purpose of the panel and the mechanisms involved with its throughput.

Panel members advised that the panel was well managed by the chairperson who they stated had a most professional approach and encouraged full discussion from all panel members.

Records identified that the panel membership reflected diverse values and opinions, panel training was arranged annually with almost 100% attendance and panel members who had any conflict of interest pertaining to review reports were excused from the panel decision making process.

The inspector noted that the organisation and management of the panel was commendable.

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 manager advised that the service had a limited number of carers with specific approval to provide short-term breaks to meet the assessed needs of families as a support to parents who retained parental responsibility and all of its central functions. Staff advised that it would be beneficial if the service could recruit and approve more carers to provide choice and meet the diverse needs of individual children.

Staff stated that they perceived the relationships between parents and carers to be very positive and direct contact was encouraged. They further advised that the disability team had been relocated and were now in premises next to the fostering team. They felt that this would lead to greater integration for this aspect of the service to include effective joint working between social care and health.

Family and Friends as Carers

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.4)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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Policies and procedures viewed showed that protocols for Friends and Family carers were formalised and that carers received that same support as non-related carers in terms of having a designated support social worker and ongoing opportunities for development and training. The team manager advised that a scheme had been developed to enable Friends and Family carers to be financially supported through Residence Order Payments and thus minimise the social work intervention and services as required.

PART C

LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY

(where applicable)

Lay Assessor _____ **Signature** _____
Date _____

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

We would welcome comments on the content of this report relating to the Inspection conducted on 11th January 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

NO

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

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, 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

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 Mrs T Douglas of Knowsley Council 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	<u>Terry Douglas</u>
Signature	<u>Terry Douglas</u>
Designation	<u>Manager Fostering Services</u>
Date	<u>25/2/05</u>

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.

Commission for Social Care Inspection
33 Greycoat Street
London
SW1P 2QF

Telephone: 020 7979 2000
Fax: 020 7979 2111

National Enquiry Line: 0845 015 0120
www.csci.org.uk

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