



Champions for
Social Care
Improvement

inspection report

Fostering Services

Stockport MBC Fostering Services

Stockport Social Services

Ponsonby House

Edward Street

Stockport

SK1 3UR

29th November 2003

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

Stockport MBC Fostering Services

Address

Stockport Social Services, Ponsonby House,
Edward Street, Stockport, SK1 3UR

Local Authority Manager

Phil Coles

Tel No:

0161 474 4611

Address

Stockport Social Services, Ponsonby House,
Edward Street, Stockport, SK1 3UR

Fax No: 0161 474 4611

Email

Address: sue.westwood@stockport.gov.uk

Registered Fostering Agency (IFA)

NO

Name of Agency

Tel No

Address

Fax No

Email Address

Registered Number of IFA

Name of Registered Provider

Name of Registered Manager (if applicable)

Date of first registration

Date of latest registration certificate

Registration Conditions Apply ?

NO

Date of last inspection

24/03/03

Date of Inspection Visit		27th November 2003	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		08:00 am	
Name of Inspector	1	Susan Winson	096596
Name of Inspector	2	N/A	
Name of Inspector	3	N/A	
Name of Inspector	4	N/A	
Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable) Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the NCSC. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process.		N/A	
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)		N/A	
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection		Sue Westwood	

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 National Care Standards Commission (NCSC) 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 NCSC in respect of Stockport MBC Fostering Services. The inspection findings relate to the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services published by the Secretary of State under sections 23 and 49 of the Care Standards Act 2000, for independent and local authority fostering services respectively.

The Fostering Services Regulations 2002 are secondary legislation, with which a service provider must comply. Service providers are expected to comply fully with the National Minimum Standards. The National Minimum standards will form the basis for judgements by the NCSC 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.

Stockport MBC has a Family Placement Service which provides a range of placements to meet the needs of children and young people. These include permanent and temporary foster care and emergency placement. Specific schemes provide for mother and baby placements, teenagers and short break care.

Following a recent review there has been a re-organisation of family placement services into a Fostering and an Adoption Team. The Service Manager has responsibility for all these services. The functions of the fostering team is the recruitment, selection, support and training of Foster Carers .

Short breaks for children with disabilities are provided through an independent agency.

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.)

Introduction

This is the second statutory inspection carried out in respect of Stockport MBC's fostering service.

Since the last inspection there have been a considerable number of positive developments which demonstrate the local authority's commitment to meeting or exceeding the Fostering Service Regulations and National Minimum Standards.

Not all of the developments have yet progressed far enough to achieve the desired outcomes and this is reflected in the number of requirements and recommendations.

A review of the fostering service has taken place and the authority was in a period of transition at the time of the inspection.

Statement of Purpose

The fostering service has a draft statement of purpose and intends to compile a children's guide. These must be completed and meet Regulation and NMS.

Fitness to provide or manage a fostering service

The fostering service is managed by people with appropriate skills and experience in this field. The manager should ensure that she achieves a management qualification by 2005.

Management of the fostering service

The service is managed efficiently by the service manager. Lines of accountability are clear. Systems for collating information and monitoring the fostering service as required by Regulation and NMS have yet to be implemented.

Securing and Promoting Welfare

Policies and procedures have been revised, including those in regard to child protection, bullying, absence without authority and behaviour management. Not all have yet been ratified or implemented.

The service is working to increase its pool of in-house foster carers and is using independent agencies to increase placement choice.

Good practice was evident in meeting the health, educational and social needs of young people in foster care. The commitment from managers, staff and carers to encouraging young people to maintain contact with their families is high.

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

Stockport MBC's recruitment and selection of staff is appropriate and is based on equal opportunities policies. The teams are fully staffed and plans are in place to manage impending vacancies.

The staff of the Family Placement team are appropriately qualified, skilled and experienced and have access to regular training. The frequency of formal supervision does not meet Regulation and NMS. Personnel files do not meet Regulation and NMS and this is being addressed.

Foster carers have access to a comprehensive training programme and support groups. Health and safety checks are carried at annual reviews. Systems for consultation with foster carers and their involvement in the development of the fostering service are well developed and valued by the enthusiastic group of carers and staff who are committed to raising standards.

Placement agreements do not comply with Regulation and reviews of carers are not carried out within the required time scales.

Records

The service maintains registers of carers and placements and there is a system for updating the registers.

All foster carers' files do not contain the appropriate information and this is being addressed.

Fitness of premises

The premises are secure and appropriate for the use of the fostering service.

Financial requirements

The standards on financial processes and viability are not applicable to Local Authority fostering services.

There is a system in operation to ensure that foster carers receive allowances and payments promptly.

Fostering panels

The fostering panel is properly constituted and meetings are well organised and conducted. Progress on clarifying the function of the panel has been made and improvements in its effectiveness are evident. Plans to continue with the developments must be carried out.

Short term breaks

Ensuring that the service received by short break carers meets Regulation and NMS remains an area for development. Policies and procedures need to underpin practice change.

Family and friends as carers

The appointment of a specific Family Placement Officer with responsibility for child specific carers has resulted in improvements which must be consolidated and made available to all such carers.

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:

Plans to revise the Statement of Purpose, Children's Guide and some of the required policies and procedures need to be completed.

Stockport MBC is required to ensure that personnel files meet Regulation and NMS.

Systems for monitoring matters in Schedule 7 of the Regulations are not fully in place.

Foster carer reviews are not always carried out at intervals of less than one year.

There is further work to be done to ensure that the fostering panel has appropriate policies and procedures which clarify its roles and responsibilities. Further work on developing and improving the service to Family and Friends Carers and Short Break Carers is required.

There is a need to continue with developments to ensure that sufficient carers are available to meet the needs of young people referred for placement.

There is a need to ensure that all staff are formally supervised and have regular appraisal.

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	3(1) and 3(4)	FS1	Stockport MBC must ensure that the draft Statement of Purpose is finalised and meets Regulation and NMS and is distributed appropriately.	January 2004
2	3(3)	FS15 FS1	Stockport MBC must ensure that a Children's Guide is compiled in an appropriate format and that it contains information on the complaints procedure.	January 2004
3	20(3)(d) and Schedule 1	FS3	Stockport MBC must ensure that personnel records include all the information outlined in Schedule 1 of Regulations.	December 2003
4	42(1) and Schedule 7	FS4	Stockport MBC must ensure that systems for monitoring all the matters in Schedule 7 are in place.	September 2003
6	33	FS7	Stockport MBC must ensure that sufficient carers are available to meet the ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic needs of young people.	November 2003
7	34(3) and Schedule 6	FS8	Stockport MBC must ensure that Foster Placement Agreements comply with Schedule 6 of Regulations.	November 2003

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	
9	13(1)	FS9	Stockport MBC must ensure that there is Behaviour Management policy and an Absence without Authority policy which meet Regulation and NMS.	January 2004
13	21(4)(a)	FS19	Stockport MBC should ensure that staff are formally supervised and that training needs are identified.	October 2003
15	29(2)	FS21	Stockport MBC must ensure that Foster Carer reviews are carried out and presented to the panel to meet with Regulation and NMS.	December 2003
17	30	FS24	Stockport MBC must ensure that case records for Foster Carers are maintained to meet Regulation and NMS.	January 2004
19	24(3)(d) 26(2)(c)	FS30	Stockport MBC must ensure that the Fostering Panels have sufficient independent members to meet Regulation and that the roles and responsibilities of panels are clarified.	January 2004
20	27 and Schedule 3	FS30	Stockport MBC must ensure that full information is provided to the panel.	January 2004

Action is being taken by the National Care Standards Commission 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 **S Winson** **Signature** _____
Second Inspector _____ **Signature** _____
Locality Manager _____ **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 and recommendations are to be addressed. This action plan will be made available on request to the Area Office.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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

No.	Regulation	Standard *	Requirement	
1	3(1) and 3(4)	FS1	Stockport MBC must ensure that the draft statement of purpose is finalised and meets Regulation and NMS and is distributed appropriately.	31/05/04
2	3(3)	FS15 FS1	Stockport MBC must ensure that a children's guide is compiled in an appropriate format and that it contains information on the complaints procedure.	31/05/04
3	20(3)(d) and Schedule 1	FS3	Stockport MBC must ensure that personnel records include all the information outlined in Schedule 1 of Regulations.	31/05/04
4	42(1) and Schedule 7	FS4	Stockport MBC must ensure that systems for monitoring all the matters in Schedule 7 are in place.	31/05/04
5	33	FS8FS7	Stockport MBC must continue with developments to ensure that sufficient carers are available to meet the needs of young people referred for placement.	01/08/04
6	34(3) and Schedule 6	FS8	Stockport MBC must ensure that foster placement agreements comply with Schedule 6 of Regulations.	31/05/04
7	13(1)	FS9	Stockport MBC must ensure that the draft behaviour management policy and absence without authority policy are implemented.	30/06/04

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	
8	21(4)(a)	FS20	Stockport MBC must ensure that staff are formally supervised, have regular appraisal and that team meetings take place.	31/05/04
9	29(2)	FS21	Stockport MBC must ensure that foster carer reviews are carried out annually.	31/05/04
10	30	FS24	Stockport MBC must ensure that case records for all foster carers are maintained to meet Regulation and NMS.	31/05/04
11	37(3)	FS24	Stockport MBC must ensure that Regulation and NMS are complied with in relation to respite carers.	31/07/04
12	26(2)	FS30	Stockport MBC must ensure that the fostering panel has appropriate policies and procedures.	31/07/04
13	34	FS32	Stockport MBC must ensure that Regulation and NMS are complied with in relation to carers who are family or friends of the young person and that the positive developments are built on and consolidated.	31/07/04

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THIS INSPECTION

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

No.	Refer to Standard *	Recommendation Action
1	FS2	Stockport MBC should ensure that the manager has achieved a qualification in management at NVQ Level 4 or equivalent by 2005.
2	FS6	Stockport MBC should ensure that risk assessments are carried out as appropriate.
3	FS8	Stockport MBC should ensure that foster placement agreements which meet Regulation and NMS are implemented.
4	FS11	Stockport MBC should ensure that the opinions of young people, their families and others concerned in their welfare are routinely sought.
5	FS16	Stockport MBC should ensure that there is clarity about the respective roles of the family placement officers and placing social workers.
6	FS22FS20	Stockport MBC should ensure that guidelines and practice documents for staff and foster carers are updated in line planned with policy changes and developments.
7	FS22	Stockport MBC should ensure that unannounced visits to foster homes are carried out.
8	FS22	Stockport MBC should ensure that there is a system in place to monitor foster carer's recording.

*** Note:**

You may refer to the relevant standard in the remainder of the report by omitting the two-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	6
Survey of placing authorities	YES
Foster carer survey	YES
Foster children survey	NO
Checks with other organisations and Individuals	YES
• Directors of Social services	YES
• Child protection officer	YES
• Specialist advisor (s)	NO
• Local Foster Care Association	NO
Tracking Individual welfare arrangements	YES
• Interview with children	YES
• Interview with foster carers	YES
• Interview with agency staff	YES
• Contact with parents	NO
• Contact with supervising social workers	NO
• Examination of files	YES
Individual interview with manager	YES
Information from provider	YES
Individual interviews with key staff	YES
Group discussion with staff	NO
Interview with panel chair	YES
Observation of foster carer training	NO
Observation of foster panel	YES
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Interview with individual child	NO
Date of Inspection	29/11/03
Time of Inspection	09:30
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	42

The following pages summarise the key findings and evidence from this inspection, together with the NCSC 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 for the fostering service is in draft form at present and is going through a consultation process which will lead to its approval by councillors. It should be ratified early in 2004 and will be made available on Stockport MBC's internet site.

A children's guide to meet Regulation and NMS must be compiled and circulated. The looked after children guide is available to young people but is not a synopsis of the statement of purpose in child-accessible language.

All of the fostering service policies, procedures and written guidelines should accurately reflect the statement of purpose.

Stockport MBC must ensure that the draft statement of purpose is finalised and meets Regulation and NMS and is distributed appropriately.

Stockport MBC must ensure that a children's guide is compiled in an appropriate format and that it contains information on the complaints procedure.

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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Standard met?

Standard met?

The fostering service is split into two family placement teams, each of which has a dedicated manager, namely the adoption team and the fostering team. The roles and functioning of the two teams have been reviewed following a draft report from an independent consultant. Family placement officers and social workers were involved in the process. The service manager will monitor the implementation of the recent changes to the teams.

The service manager and the fostering team manager have considerable relevant experience and skills in family placement and in management. They stated that Stockport MBC runs regular courses for managers which they attend, including staff supervision, recruitment and selection, health and safety and financial training.

The service manager is undertaking NVQ level 5 in management and Stockport MBC should ensure that this qualification is gained by 2005.

Stockport MBC should ensure that the manager has achieved a qualification in management at NVQ level 4 or equivalent by 2005.

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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Standard met?

Standard met?

Personnel files for the managers and staff do not contain the information set out in Schedule 1 of the Regulations and this must be rectified. The personnel department is in the process of auditing all files to achieve compliance and is requesting information from staff, including evidence of qualifications.

Systems to ensure that police checks are renewed every three years are in place.

Stockport MBC must ensure that personnel records include all the information outlined in Schedule 1 of Regulations.

Management of the Fostering Service

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 4 (4.1 – 4.5)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

The fostering service must ensure that there is a robust system for the manager to monitor matters outlined in Schedule 7 of the Regulations. The service manager is addressing this and a system for complaints has been set up. Plans are in place for accident forms to be provided to foster carers and there is a format for family placement officers to record any concerns. The service manager monitors records and files on a quarterly cycle.

There is a system for the notification of significant events and incidents involving child protection issues during this inspection cycle had been handled appropriately by the fostering service.

The inspection of financial procedures is not applicable to Local Authority Fostering Services.

Stockport MBC must ensure that systems for monitoring all the matters in Schedule 7 are in place.

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

2

Death of a child placed with foster parents.

0

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

0

Serious illness or accident of a child.

0

Outbreak of serious infectious disease at a foster home.

0

Actual or suspected involvement of a child in prostitution.

0

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

0

Serious complaint about a foster parent.

0

Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.

0

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

1

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?****3**

The manager's job description reflects her roles and responsibilities. Lines of accountability and delegated powers are clearly defined. In her absence, the family placement manager or adoption manager deputise on day to day matters. Her line manager, who is a senior service manager, is available for decision making.

The fostering team manager is due to leave the authority in the near future and there are plans to use an agency worker whilst recruitment is progressed.

Securing and Promoting Welfare

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 6 (6.1 - 6.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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The fostering service management and staff expressed a commitment to promoting and securing children's welfare by completing full assessments and by inspecting carers' homes and care practices on a regular basis.

Foster carers' homes visited by the inspectors were adequately furnished and decorated and maintained to a good standard of cleanliness and hygiene. The manager and staff stated that children and young people usually have a bedroom to themselves and any sharing of rooms would be risk assessed.

Health and safety checks on foster homes are carried out as part of each carer's annual review. New policies are in place which cover transport of children in foster care and health and safety. Safety equipment is provided to foster carers as needed.

The production of effective risk assessments and risk management plans is an area for development and should cover health and safety, safe care and enabling young people to take risks appropriate to their age and development. Placing social workers complete personal risk assessments for each young person at the time of placement.

Stockport MBC should ensure that risk assessments are carried out as appropriate.

The fostering service has a system to ensure that foster carers' CRB checks are renewed every three years.

Foster carers have a supervision agreement which sets out the methods used to ensure young people are safeguarded and their welfare promoted.

The foster carers visited by the inspector were aware of the Commission's role and were prepared for the visits.

Foster carer training includes safe caring strategies and practices.

Standard 7 (7.1 - 7.7)

The fostering service ensures that children and young people, and their families, are provided with foster care services which value diversity and promote equality.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

2

Staff and foster carers are invited to seminars which aim to raise disability awareness and knowledge. These are not limited to those foster carers who care for children with disabilities.

The manager and staff outlined the limitations of the fostering service in regard to meeting the needs of young people in regard to religion ethnic origin, language, culture and disability. Shortage of appropriate carers results in an inconsistent provision and the fostering service must address this. Where appropriate, placements are not available in-house, there is provision for the manager to commission placement from independent providers and appropriate protocols are in place.

Stockport MBC must continue with developments to ensure that sufficient carers are available to meet the needs of young people referred for placement.

The provision of aids and adaptations and specialist services such as translation are said to be readily accessible. The grants available to carers include festival allowances which the foster carers know how to access.

Stockport MBC has a corporate diversity group with representatives from all service areas. Principles of promoting equality and valuing diversity permeate many of the policies and procedures of the fostering service.

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?**

2

The fostering service acknowledges that the current pool of foster carers imposes limitations on matching considerations, particularly for adolescents, children with disabilities and larger family groups. The agency is using external placements to increase placement choice.

Family placement officers report that they are being asked to approach carers to take placements which are inappropriate, especially emergency placements. Where such placements happen, extra support to carers is put into place.

Records indicate good practice in regard to introductory programmes for young people going into foster care on a planned basis.

Following the last inspection a new format for foster placement agreements has been devised which will meet Regulation and NMS. Stockport MBC should ensure that these are implemented.

Stockport MBC should ensure that foster placement agreements which meet Regulation and NMS are implemented.

Matching reports for young people going into long term placements are comprehensive and include consideration of the young person's assessed needs.

Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

Stockport MBC has revised its policies on child protection and bullying to meet Regulation and NMS. New procedures on professional abuse include references to foster carers. Policies on behaviour management and absence without authority have been produced and must be ratified and implemented.

Stockport MBC must ensure that the draft behaviour management policy and absence without authority policy are implemented.

The information for foster carers in relation to developing a safe care family policy is comprehensive and wide ranging. It includes practical aspects, such as dress and the use of babysitters. Records indicate that safe caring policies are followed in practice. There are plans for an expanded safe caring policy to be developed in consultation with family placement officers and foster carers.

Development in promoting and safeguarding the welfare of young people in respite or short break placements is needed (see NMS 31).

Foster carers visited by the inspector were clear about appropriate and inappropriate sanctions and demonstrated a range of skills in managing behaviour. Details of prohibited methods of behaviour management are in the foster care agreement.

Appropriate training is available to foster carers, including behaviour management, child abuse and building self-esteem.

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

100

%

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?

4

Stockport MBC has a policy on contact which was implemented in 2001 and which includes short break care. It is clear that the authority is committed to ensuring that the policy is carried out in practice and that contact arrangements are established, maintained, monitored and reviewed.

Foster carer training includes a session on 'retaining the links' and the carers interviewed demonstrated a commitment to encouraging and enabling contact and an appreciation of the rights of young people in this respect.

Contact arrangements are specified in foster placement agreements and monitored at statutory reviews and by family placement officers when they visit carers. Placing social workers are invited to comment on how carers manage contact for the annual foster carers' reviews.

Where children and young people are placed out of the area attention is paid to supporting contact.

Support is available to carers to ensure that contact visits are facilitated, from family support workers and family resource workers.

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?	2
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Stockport MBC must continue to work to ensure that there are systems in place to seek the views and opinions of young people and their families about issues which affect their daily life and future. The Children's Rights Service has been asked to lead the development of effective consultation with young people and the service manager outlined the need to look at consultation with parents.

Stocmkport MBC should ensure that the opinions of young people, their families and others concerned in their welfare are routinely sought.

Young people are encouraged to attend and participate in their reviews and to complete the authority's consultation document. Foster carers encourage or assist young people in completing these documents and support them in attending their reviews. Records show instances of parents being consulted about specific issues.

There was evidence at the inspection that foster carers are consulted and are actively involved in the development of the family placement service.

Information on how to complain and the process involved must be included in the children's guide (see NMS 1).

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
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Stockport MBC has a comprehensive health policy which includes health monitoring, contact numbers for LAC nurses and facilities for young people to make their own arrangements to contact an independent health worker.

Health issues and needs are covered in foster carer training and monitored through reviews. The manager stated that work is being undertaken to ensure that foster carers have a written health record for all young people in their care (presently this is limited to under 5's) and this is good practice.

The panel has a member whose experience and skills are in the field of healthcare.

Examples of carers being supported to meet complex health needs indicate that the fostering service is promoting the health and development of young people placed with foster carers.

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?**

4

Staff reported positive links with Stockport's Education Support Team and gave examples of joint work undertaken to enhance the educational opportunities of young people in foster care. The service they provide to young people in foster care includes homework support. All looked after children have an allocated education support worker. The service manager can evidence that multi-agency working is raising educational achievement for looked after children.

The education support team monitors SATS results and delays in waiting for school allocation. The manager of the family placement team meets with the education support team every two weeks and the education of all looked after children is discussed, including educational progress, exclusions and those who are likely to be excluded from schools.

Expectations of foster carers in terms of supporting education are documented in foster placement agreements. Family placement officers gave examples of good practice where foster carers are supporting young people in education and advocating on their behalf. Educational progress is discussed at every young person's review.

The fostering service supports carers when young people are not in full time education. Prompt action to put in support, through outreach workers, when a young person was unexpectedly excluded from school allowed the foster carer involved to keep to commitments made.

PEPS and SEN statements are on young people's files. The manager stated that 90% of foster carer households have personal computers for use by the young people and the fostering service can provide them. Access to educational psychologists was also said to be available.

The fostering service holds financial responsibilities for school costs, including uniform, trips and equipment.

There was evidence of young people's leisure needs and wishes being met.

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

Foster carers' training includes sessions on the Leaving Care Act.

Referrals to the 16+ teams are occurring as appropriate and there is a process for funding the continuing foster placement of those young people in full time education.

The family placement team and the 16+ team are working together to improve services for young people in transition to adulthood.

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

Stockport MBC has a written procedure for recruitment and selection of staff, which includes interviewing all staff and ensuring that references are taken up.

Not all personnel files contain the information specified in Schedule 1 of the Regulations (see NMS 3). A checklist is being devised to ensure all information is received when the service is recruiting staff. The service is using agency workers and appropriate information, including CRB checks, qualifications and employment history is held.

All staff involved in the assessment of foster carers are qualified social workers with experience and skills in family placement. They have undertaken training in completing competence based assessments.

Administrative staff have clear guidelines which outline the service's expectations in terms of confidentiality.

An induction process is in place for all new staff which includes monthly monitoring.

Total number of staff of the agency:

17

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

3

Standard 16 (16.1 - 16.16)
Staff are organised and managed in a way that delivers an efficient and effective foster care service.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

Since the last inspection an office manager has been appointed. Clarity of roles in the administration team has improved and supervision and training needs are being addressed.

Family placement officers continue to report that they are involved in a lot of administrative tasks, such as photocopying and filing. Stockport MBC should continue to monitor the adequacy of administrative support during this period of transition.

The family placement teams operate a duty system, which ensures that enquiries from prospective foster carers are dealt with promptly and the managers allocate follow-up work. Similarly, the person on duty is available to deal with referrals for services.

The clarification of roles and responsibilities of the supervising social workers and the placing social workers remains an area for development. Family placement officers and the team managers are aware of the tensions and are working to achieve better communication and effective working relationships. Examples of joint visits to carers to address difficulties or potentially problematic areas were outlined which indicate good practice and joint training is happening.

Stockport MBC should ensure that there is clarity about the respective roles of the family placement officers and placing social workers.

Standard 17 (17.1 - 17.7)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

At the time of the inspection the fostering service was fully staffed and plans to recruit for impending vacancies were in hand. It was not possible to assess the adequacy of staffing at the time of the inspection due to the recent reorganisation of the teams. This will be looked at in more detail at the next inspection.

Progress in ensuring the service has an adequate range of carers to meet the needs of young people has been made since the last inspection. Temporary posts to boost recruitment have been filled and include a person with a marketing background. A recruitment policy is being written and there will also be work carried out on how to retain carers. Administrative backup to ensure that there is management monitoring and tracking of the recruitment process is in place. The service manager outlined plans to achieve a robust recruitment strategy. (See NMS 7 and NMS 8).

The need to recruit more carers has been identified in the business plan for the next year. A recruitment group, consisting of supervising social workers, foster carers and the authority's publicity section, meet to develop annual plans for recruitment.

The manager reported that few carers had left in the past few years and that the fostering service works to retain carers.

The fostering service has a person specification for foster carers who work with sibling groups of three and above which includes essential and desirable attributes and skills.

There is specialism amongst the pool of foster carers and it was evident to the inspector that carers have developed skills and expertise in areas such as the care of adolescents, moving children on to adoption and work with pre-school children.

Not all foster carer assessments contain the information required by Schedule 3. Specifically, records of interviews with personal referees and foster care agreements were not on all files inspected. The manager must ensure that all the information specified in the Regulations is obtained. Recent assessments show an improvement but there is work to be done on bringing longer established carers' files up to standard. (See NMS 24).

The fostering service uses a competence based model for the assessment of foster carers and staff have been appropriately trained.

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
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The inspector considers that Stockport MBC is a fair and competent employer with reasonable employment practices.

Support to carers outside office hours is being addressed and has improved. Outreach teams now provide a service to young people in foster care. Carers expressed satisfaction with the levels of support they receive from the fostering service.

Appropriate whistle blowing procedures are in place.

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?	2
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The fostering service has a draft induction procedure for staff induction. Staff training is well developed in the authority and the family placement team has development days to address in-house training needs.

Formal appraisal which identifies the training and development needs of staff must be carried out. (See NMS 20).

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)
All staff are properly accountable and supported.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
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Staff report that they are well supported. Supervision contracts are being developed which must include provision of appraisal and personal development plans. Formal supervision is infrequent and the manager stated that this has resulted from the staff shortages. Informal supervision was said to be readily available to the staff.

Stockport MBC must ensure that staff are formally supervised, have regular appraisal and that team meetings take place.

The service manager supervises the office manager once a month which the latter described as a helpful, two way process. Team meetings are planned but do not always take place due to pressures of work. Once the team is fully staffed this should be addressed.

The manager should ensure that guidelines and practice documents are updated in line with planned policy changes and distributed to staff and carers.

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**

All foster carers have an allocated supervising social worker and 70% of annual reviews take place within the required timescales.

Stockport MBC must ensure that foster carer reviews are carried out annually.

Work has taken place on responding to allegations about carers and the service is looking to involve independent support for carers during investigations. Discussions with the Foster Care Association are taking place.

Family placement officers are clear about their support and supervisory roles in working with carers.

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**

Foster carers and family placement officers report that positive working relationships exist. Foster carers have a high expectation of support.

A new foster carer recording policy is in place which will be implemented following training sessions with carers. This separates recording for each young person in placement. It would be good practice for supervising social workers to sign that they have read foster carers' recording sheets, to evidence that they are monitoring practice.

Stockport MBC should ensure that there is a system in place to monitor foster carers' recording.

Unannounced visits to foster carers are not being carried out by Stockport MBC and this should be rectified and an appropriate system for recording and monitoring these visits implemented. Foster carers have been informed, by the service, that this will happen.

The fostering service is moving towards competence based reviews. The format of review reports has been amended to meet Regulation and NMS. First reviews go to the panel for consideration as do summaries of subsequent reviews.

The foster carer handbook is in draft form and is a comprehensive document. The service should ensure that it is ratified and distributed to carers. Carers reported lack of written information as a problem area, and the handbook should address this.

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?

4

The commitment to provision of a flexible training and support programme for carers is high, as is the quality of the training courses.

The fostering service has a comprehensive training programme for foster carers and, in addition, they have access to training provided by Stockport MBC Social Services Department staff development team, which includes joint training with social workers. The fostering service brings in specialist trainers for topics such as understanding and helping traumatised children. Mandatory training includes child protection, first aid, contact issues, education and health.

NVQ's are available to carers and training undertaken by foster carers is documented on their files.

Seminars and support groups organised by the fostering service meet in a variety of venues and at different times of the day and the week, thus extending the opportunities for carers to attend.

Child specific carers are now involved in training and have access to support groups.

There was an evident commitment to training expressed by carers who stated that the content was interesting, useful and informative.

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

A register of all children placed in foster care is now in place and a database of foster carers which will inform monitoring and tracking is in place and is developing to include more information. Systems for updating the registers are in place.

There are no mechanisms for collecting and collating the information outlined in Schedule 7 of the Regulations to inform management monitoring and this must be addressed (see NMS 4).

All foster carer files must contain all the information required by Regulation 30. Files inspected did not always contain signed foster care agreements or notifications of approval.

Stockport MBC must ensure that case records for all foster carers are maintained to meet Regulation and NMS.

A system to monitor the information that carers receive from placing social workers and to ensure any deficiencies are remedied is in place. Family placement officers inform the service manager if any documentation is not in place 24 hours after placement and she addresses this with the fieldwork teams manager. Records indicate that the family placement manager monitors this through individual supervision with family placement officers.

Records in regard to young people in respite care placements are not satisfactory. There are no written records indicating how the young person responded to the visits. Family placement officers stated that the carers keep diaries of visits; the information is not transferred to the fostering service's records. Whilst it is accepted that these placements are often longstanding and that there is good communication between parents and carers, there is also a need for written information about a young person's needs and how they will be met.

Stockport MBC must ensure that Regulation and NMS are complied with in relation to respite carers.

Standard 25 (25.1 - 25.13)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

2

The variation in current weekly payments to carers indicates the differing amounts from the youngest child specific placement to carers on the teencare project.

Records of allegations and complaints are kept on the foster carers' individual files. The manager must ensure they are collated (see NMS 4 of this report).

There is a recording policy for staff and there are appropriate permanent and secure records.

Finance information needs to be included in the foster carer's handbook.

Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:

231

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

159

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

137

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

16

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

9

Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £

81

Maximum £

347

Fitness of Premises for use as Fostering Service

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

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

Standard 26 (26.1 - 26.5)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The fostering service has dedicated office space. Space is limited and hot desking is being considered.

Records are stored securely and a clear desk policy is in operation. The office manager outlined the need for more lockable cupboard space.

Confidential waste is separated in the offices and is collected.

The building has an alarm.

The number of computers available to staff and their levels of access to IT systems is being reviewed at present.

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?
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	9
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Not applicable to Local Authority Fostering Services.

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?
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	9
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Not applicable to Local Authority Fostering Services.

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

Foster carers receive allowances and agreed expenses.

In response to their requests, carers receive payslips with a breakdown of the allowances
The manager, administrative staff and foster carers reported that payments are efficiently carried out.

There is an appropriate system for petty cash and auditing.

Allowances and fees are reviewed annually.

Fostering Panels

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

Since the last inspection a review of the fostering panel has taken place and there is a written panel protocol, a job description and personal specification for members and a confidentiality agreement in place.

A procedural guide to include clarity about the quality assurance role of panel and the panel's expectations of the quality of written reports and guidance as to who will present them is needed.

Stockport MBC must ensure that the fostering panel has appropriate policies and procedures.

The panel is properly constituted and meetings are well managed. The panel attended by the inspector was efficiently chaired to allow comprehensive discussion in which all members had opportunity to take part. The range of knowledge and experience of panel members was evident.

The chair of panel has considerable, relevant experience in children's services. She outlined the positive changes made and the need to build on this progress.

Panel training has included Regulation and NMS and the use of competence based assessments and the service manager is negotiating with the panel in order to meet training needs.

Work is being undertaken on facilitating the attendance of carers at panel.

Panel minutes include examples of family placement officers taking cases to panel for discussion and receiving constructive advice.

Administrative support to the panel is efficient and papers are received prior to the meeting and are collected for shredding afterwards. Appropriate minutes of the meeting are taken.

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?

2

The service manager acknowledged that the provision of short break care remains an area for development. Policies are in draft form and must be ratified and implemented. The service manager agreed the need for guidelines to be developed for the visiting of children and young people who are receiving respite care, as there is no protocol on who should see the child in placement nor how often this should occur.

Short breaks for children with disabilities are provided through a local independent agency with which Stockport MBC has an ongoing agreement. This agency will be separately inspected. A new post for a worker to concentrate on children with disabilities has been established. This worker will link with the independent provider.

A scheme for short breaks for children and young people who are living with their families has been running for two years and is staffed by supervising social workers managed separately from the family placement team. Policies and procedures were said to be evolving and the fostering service must ensure that these are in place to meet Regulation and NMS.

The scheme is part of the support services for families in crisis in Stockport, and includes flexible day care in the local community. Intervention is time limited and task centred. There is said to be the flexibility for the short breaks to move into full time care should a young person become looked after.

Recruitment and training of staff and carers is shared with the family placement teams.

Family and Friends as Carers

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.4)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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Procedures on child specific placements have been developed, have undergone a consultation process and are awaiting ratification.

The establishment of a time limited post, within the family placement team, to concentrate on the needs of child specific carers has clearly led to an improvement in the service. Support to carers has increased and they now have the opportunity to participate in training and in support groups. Recent support group meetings have addressed issues around residence orders and special guardianship orders.

One of the child specific carers attends the Foster Care Association meetings as a representative of the group.

A newsletter for child specific carers has been developed.

Written policies and procedures are developing and there is more clarity about the allowances available.

Stockport MBC must ensure that Regulation and NMS are complied with in relation to carers who are family or friends of the young person and that the positive developments are built on and consolidated.

PART C

LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY

(where applicable)

Not applicable.

Lay Assessor N/A **Signature** N/A

Date N/A

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

We would welcome comments on the content of this report relating to the Inspection conducted on 29th November 2003 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

Action taken by the NCSC 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

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

Note:

In instances where there is a major difference of view between the Inspector and the Registered Provider responsible Local Authority fostering service Manager both views will be made available on request to the Area Office.

D.2 Please provide the Commission with a written Action Plan by 6th July 2004, which indicates how statutory requirements and recommendations are to be addressed and stating a clear timescale for completion. This will be kept on file and made available on request.

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

Action plan was required

Action plan was received at the point of publication

Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion

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

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

Other: <enter details here>

Public reports

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

D.3 PROVIDER'S AGREEMENT

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

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

Print Name _____
Signature _____
Designation _____
Date _____

Or

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

Print Name _____
Signature _____
Designation _____
Date _____

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