



Making Social Care
Better for People

inspection report

Fostering Services

London Borough of Harrow Fostering Services

429-433 Pinner Road

North Harrow

Middx

HA1 4HN

13th February 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

London Borough of Harrow Fostering Services

Address

429-433 Pinner Road, North Harrow, Middx, HA1 4HN

Local Authority Manager

Madeline Hendley

Tel No:

020 8863 5544

Address

429-433 Pinner Road, North Harrow, Middx, HA1 4HN

Fax No:

020 8424 8054

Email Address

madeleine.henley@harrow.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?

Date of last inspection

Date and Time of Inspection Visit		ID Code	
Name of Inspector	1	Geoff Corre	111332
Name of Inspector	2		
Name of Inspector	3		
Name of Inspector	4		
Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable)			
Name of Interpreter/Signer (if applicable)			

Introduction to Report and Inspection

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Implementation of Statutory Requirements from last Inspection

Statutory Requirements from this Inspection

Good Practice Recommendations from this Inspection

Part B: Inspection Methods & Findings

(National Minimum Standards For Fostering Services)

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- 2. Fitness to carry on or manage a fostering service**
- 3. Management of the fostering service**
- 4. Securing and promoting welfare**
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- 6. Records**
- 7. Fitness of premises**
- 8. Financial requirements**
- 9. Fostering panels**
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Part C: Lay Assessor's Summary (where applicable)

Part D: Provider's Response

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D.2. Action Plan

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INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

Independent and local authority fostering services which fall within the jurisdiction of the 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 2001 and the Children Act 1989 as amended.

This document summarises the inspection findings of the NCSC in respect of London Borough of Harrow 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 2001 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 2001. 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

Harrow Family Placement Services comprises three teams, each led by a Team Manager – Adoption and Permanence, Fostering and Family Link. They operate a combined Duty Service, and are all accountable to a Service Manager. All three teams work closely together, and enjoy good links with the Children’s Social Work Service which is situated in the same building.

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.)

Foster carers spoke highly of the service, and of the level of support provided. However, several policies and procedures were not in place. The Service Manager has been off sick for some time, and is unlikely to return, and the Team Manager, Adoption and Permanence and the Team Manager, Fostering, have both recently resigned. It is essential that these posts are filled, and that written policies and procedures are produced, so as to meet the National Minimum Standards and Fostering Services Regulations.

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:

YES

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 Local Authority fostering service was unable to produce any finalised versions of its policies and procedures and failed to produce evidence of how it meets' or is seeking to meet several key standards. Such policies as it has are all in draft form, whilst others, including a children's guide, a foster carers' handbook, a policy on health and a policy on contact had not been written.

Implementation of Statutory Requirements from Last Inspection

Requirements from last Inspection fully actioned?

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 2001.

No.	Regulation	Standard	Required actions	

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		

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 2001, 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	A Foster Carer's Handbook and Children's Guide must be produced.	4 weeks
2	14	10	A policy on contact must be devised.	4 weeks
3	15	11	A policy on health care must be produced.	4 weeks

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	4	Procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of the service, and for ensuring quality assurance should be produced.
2	5	Evidence to demonstrate that the service is managed effectively and efficiently should be produced.
3	11	The service should produce some evidence that this standard is being met.
4	14	The service should provide evidence of how carers help to develop skills for adult living.
5	19	The service should produce evidence of training provided to staff.
6	21	The service should provide evidence of a strategy to support carers.

* Note: You may refer to the relevant standard in the remainder of the report by omitting the 2-letter prefix e.g FS10 refers to Standard 10.

PART B INSPECTION METHODS & FINDINGS

The following inspection methods have been used in the production of this report

Number of Inspector days spent	7
Survey of placing authorities	NO
Foster carer survey	NO
Foster children survey	NO
Checks with other organisations and Individuals	NO
• Directors of Social services	NO
• Child protection officer	NO
• Specialist advisor (s)	NO
• Local Foster Care Association	NO
Tracking Individual welfare arrangements	YES
• Interview with children	NO
• Interview with foster carers	YES
• Interview with agency staff	NO
• 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	YES
Observation of foster panel	YES
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Interview with individual child	NO
Date of Inspection	13/03/03
Time of Inspection	10.00
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	45

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.

Statement of Purpose

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

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

Standard 1 (1.1 - 1.6)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

The service has a draft statement of purpose which includes the aim of the service, the principles of the service, the service structure, the service's providers, the foster carers task description and a list of services provided for children and young people. However there is no Foster Carer's Handbook nor is there any Children's Guide. In view of the fact that this document is headed "working draft" it would appear that it has not been endorsed by senior managers or members of the local authority.

Fitness to Carry On or Manage a Fostering Service

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 2 (2.1 - 2.4)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The service manager and two team managers are all extremely experienced and qualified social workers with considerable knowledge and experience of family placements. However the service manager has been off sick for some considerable time and there is no interim replacement, and the manager of the task centre team has recently resigned from her post. It is important that these key personnel are replaced as soon as possible.

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 service manager reports to an Assistant Director for Child Care Services who is also an extremely experienced and well qualified manager.

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 assurance.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

1

No written procedures were available for inspection.

Number of statutory notifications made to NCSC 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.

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:

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?

1

No evidence was produced to demonstrate this standard.

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?

4

All carers are carefully vetted and assessed prior to approval. Those carers visited by the inspector all demonstrated a good knowledge of their task and the environment was entirely fit for purpose.

Standard 7 (7.1 - 7.7)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The Borough aims to place children with carers of a suitable background wherever possible, and where that is not possible it seeks to ensure that children and young persons needs are met in terms of their religious and cultural practices.

Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.7)		
Local authority fostering services, and voluntary agencies placing children in their own right, ensure that each child or young person placed in foster care is carefully matched with a carer capable of meeting her/his assessed needs. For agencies providing foster carers to local authorities, those agencies ensure that they offer carers only if they represent appropriate matches for a child for whom a local authority is seeking a carer.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
The authority matches children to carers and takes into this account in the care plans and reviews.		

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
The service has a draft policy on the care and control of children and young people in foster care and this sets appropriate and inappropriate methods of control restraint and discipline. It also has a set of safe caring guidelines for foster carers as well as a draft procedure for recognizing, recording and addressing bullying. In addition there is a protocol regarding unannounced visits by social services staff to foster carers to ensure the welfare of children and young people. However although it operates in accordance with the local ACPC guidelines there is no specific child protection policy for the service itself.		
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?	2
No evidence of this standard was available, other than reference to contact on review forms and care plans.		

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?**

1

No evidence was produced to demonstrate that this standard is met.

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?**

1

No evidence was produced to demonstrate that this standard is met.

Standard 13 (13.1 - 13.8)

The fostering service gives a high priority to meeting the educational needs of each child or young person in foster care and ensures that she/he is encouraged to attain her/his full potential.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The authority has a policy statement regarding the corporate parenting principals for the education of children looked after as well as a statement on the role of foster carers in supporting the education of children looked after. In addition parents commented that they are encouraged to attend meetings at their foster children's schools and with the education department where required.

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?

1

No evidence was produced to demonstrate that this standard is met.

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

Staff are recruited in accordance with the local authorities equal opportunities policy and all appropriate checks and references are undertaken by a separate personnel section of the social services department.

Total number of staff of the agency:

14

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

5

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 loss managers due to ill health or resignation may be an opportunity to re-structure the service. At present, the absence of a Service Manager is apparent, but the Team Managers provide good support and supervision.

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

Staff and carers enjoy positive working relationships. All staff are qualified and experienced, and the Borough recruits a suitable range of carers.

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 fostering service operates in accordance with a number of corporate and social services department policies which all operate in accordance with sound employment practice.

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?**

1

No evidence was produced to demonstrate that this standard is met.

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)		
All staff are properly accountable and supported.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
There are two team managers in the service, one for adoption and permanency and one for assessment. Staff receive regular supervision from their team managers and it is therefore vital that the post of team manager for the assessment team be replaced as soon as possible.		

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?	1
No evidence was produced to demonstrate that this standard is met.		

Standard 22 (22.1 - 22.10)		
The fostering service is a managed one that provides supervision for foster carers and helps them to develop their skills.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
Foster carers spoke very positively of the supporters supervision provided by staff in the family placements service and each has a carers supervision contract which includes a set agenda and review dates. A separate carers supervision record is also maintained.		

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 number of foster carers have either successfully completed or are currently undertaking the NVQ in Foster Care. In addition, the service provides a number of training courses and guest speakers which enable carers to develop and maintain their skills and knowledge. The foster carers recently took part in a piece of research undertaken by the University of Kent and appropriate feedback forum has been arranged. The findings were as follows; 31% considered support and training was very good, 25% considered it to be good, 34% thought it was adequate, 3% thought it was poor and 3% considered it to be variable. These ratings reflected the frequency of visits. Concern was expressed that some carers cannot have an allocated link worker.

With regard to training, 84% said that they had received 2 to 6 training sessions a year, 25% thought that the training was very good, 20% that it was good and 16% that it was adequate. In addition 59% of carers felt that they were valued as colleagues. Training courses have covered a wide variety of subjects including sexually abused children and children with angry behaviour.

Records

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 24 (24.1 - 24.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

Files examined by the Inspector demonstrated that this standard is being met.

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?

1

Several key items of information were not available at the time of the inspection and had to be obtained by telephone and e-mail at a later date.

Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:	88
Number of placements made by the agency in the last 12 months:	107
Number of placements made by the agency which ended in the past 12 months:	86
Number of new foster carers approved during the last 12 months:	10
Number of foster carers who left the agency during the last 12 months:	6
Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £	257.00
Maximum £	309.00

* This information was not provided, despite several requests

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

All teams operate from the Children's Social Services offices in Pinner Road, North Harrow. This is an extremely busy area office which is shared with other children social worker staff. Link workers operate from a large open playing area but managers do have there own separate offices so that they can provide confidential supervision and consultation. All records are stored securely.

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 operates in accordance with the local authority's corporate governance and financial procedures.

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 operates in accordance with the local authority's corporate governance and financial procedures.

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

Carers receive an appropriate allowance and expenses which are paid on time. Some carers expressed concern that there are no special allowances for birthdays and festivals but these are included within the standard allowance.

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

The panel comprises an Independent Chair, a Team Manager and adviser, a Deputy Chair who is the manager of the Family Centre, a manager of the Learning Disabilities Team, a local authority councillor, and three independent persons and as follows a foster carer from a voluntary agency and a representative from the health trust. The chair is not involved in the selection of the panel nor is there any induction or guide or a contract. The panel meets once a month and makes recommendations to the authority. The chair has asked for a development day for members but this has yet to be forthcoming.

The chair has had considerable experience in fostering and adoption with both local authorities and a voluntary agency and is now operating in a freelance capacity. She has been operating as chair for the last three years.

At the meeting observed by the inspector the vice chair was observed to manage the panel appropriately seeking opinions from all members and “unpicking” the key issues arising from the Forms F. However it was noticeable that the quality of the Forms F was variable and in one example which was presented by an independent agency, it was not updated to reflect changes on the basis that the social worker stated that the forms F were only updated once every three years. The panel was observed to be appropriately challenging presenting social workers on issues arising from their reports and, with regard to some re-approvals it was noted that although the review had been completed in September 2002, it had not reached the Team Manager until March 2003.

Short-Term Breaks

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- When foster care is provided as a short-term break for a child, the arrangement recognises that the parents remain the main carers for the child.

Standard 31 (31.1 - 31.2)

Where a fostering service provides short-term breaks for children in foster care, they have policies and procedures, implemented in practice, to meet the particular needs of children receiving short-term breaks.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

0

Not applicable

Family and Friends as Carers

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.4)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	0
Not applicable		

PART C

LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY

(where applicable)

Lay Assessor _____ **Signature** _____

Date _____

Lead Inspector _____ **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 13th February 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

Comments were received from the provider

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

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

Note:

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

D.2 Please provide the Commission with a written Action Plan by 8th July 2003, 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 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Action plan was received at the point of publication | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Action plan did not cover all the statutory requirements and required further discussion | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Provider has declined to provide an action plan | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other: <enter details here> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

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 Amy Weir of London Borough of Harrow Fostering Services 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 Amy Weir of London Borough of Harrow Fostering Services 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 _____

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

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