



Making Social Care
Better for People

inspection report

Fostering Services

Derby City Council - Fostering Service

Derby City Social Services

Middleton House

27 St Marys Gate

Derby

DE1 3NS

18th –22 October 2004

Commission for Social Care Inspection

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

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

The role of CSCI is to:

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

Inspection Methods & Findings

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

The 4-point scale ranges from:

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

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

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

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

FOSTERING SERVICE INFORMATION

Local Authority Fostering Service?

YES

Name of Authority

Derby City Council - Fostering Service

Address

Derby City Social Services, 2nd Floor, Norman House,
Friargate, Derby, DE1 1NU

Local Authority Manager

Tel No:

01332 717702

Address

As above

Fax No:

Email Address

katiedharris@derby.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 ?

NA

Date of last inspection

27/10/03

Date of Inspection Visit		13 October 2004 18th –22 October 2004		ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		09:00 am- 5pm		
Name of Inspector	1	Jenny Thornton	074480	
Name of Inspector	2	Nancy Bradley		
Name of Inspector	3	Charlotte Cordingley (Locum)		
Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable) Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the CSCI. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process.				
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)				
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection		Katy Harris-Head of Service Lynda Stone, Sally Penrose-Service Managers		

Introduction to Report and Inspection

Inspection visits

Description of Fostering Service

Part A: Summary of Inspection Findings

Reports and Notifications to the Local Authority and Secretary of State

Implementation of Statutory Requirements from last Inspection

Statutory Requirements from this Inspection

Good Practice Recommendations from this Inspection

Part B: Inspection Methods & Findings

(National Minimum Standards For Fostering Services)

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

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

Part D: Provider's Response

D.1. Provider's comments

D.2. Action Plan

D.3. Provider's agreement

INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

Independent and local authority fostering services which fall within the jurisdiction of the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) are subject to inspection, to establish if the service is meeting the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services and the requirements of the Care Standards Act 2000, the Fostering Services Regulations 2002 and the Children Act 1989 as amended.

This document summarises the inspection findings of the CSCI in respect of Derby City Council - Fostering Service. The inspection findings relate to the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services published by the Secretary of State under sections 23 and 49 of the Care Standards Act 2000, for independent and local authority fostering services respectively.

The Fostering Services Regulations 2002 are secondary legislation, with which a service provider must comply. Service providers are expected to comply fully with the National Minimum Standards. The National Minimum standards will form the basis for judgements by the CSCI in relation to independent fostering agencies regarding registration, the imposition and variation of registration conditions and any enforcement action, and in relation to local authority fostering services regarding notices to the local authority and reports to the Secretary of State under section 47 of the Care Standards Act 2000.

The report follows the format of the National Minimum Standards and the numbering shown in the report corresponds to that of the standards.

The report will show the following:

- Inspection methods used
- Key findings and evidence
- Overall ratings in relation to the standards
- Compliance with the Regulations
- Notifications to the Local Authority and Reports to the Secretary of State
- Required actions on the part of the provider
- Recommended good practice
- Summary of the findings
- Report of the Lay Assessor (where relevant)
- Providers response and proposed action plan to address findings

This report is a public document.

INSPECTION VISITS

Inspections will be undertaken in line with the agreed regulatory framework with additional visits as required. This is in accordance with the provisions of the Care Standards Act 2000. The following inspection methods have been used in the production of this report. The report represents the inspector's findings from the evidence found at the specified inspection dates.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED.

Derby City fostering service is part of Derby City Council Social Service Department and as such is governed by the policies and procedures, which apply to Derby City Council. The fostering service provides the following services for children and young people aged between 0 to 18 years in the derby city areas:

- ❖ Time limited placements-which include emergency and ongoing placements
- ❖ Link Care offers short term breaks for children with disabilities
- ❖ Respite care -offers short term breaks to children cared for by other foster carers
- ❖ Long term placements -where adoption is not feasible
- ❖ Project placements –which apply to children with emotional and behavioural problems who require additional time, effort and skilled carers
- ❖ Children First- which applies to children with significant disabilities. These placements tend to be long term.

A total of 230 children and young people were placed with the service at the time of the inspection. The service currently has 160 approved foster carers. The fostering service recruits, registers, and provides ongoing support to new and existing carers. A team of qualified social workers support the carers.

PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

Inspector's Summary

(This is an overview of the inspector's findings, which includes good practice, quality issues, areas to be addressed or developed and any other concerns.)

The focus of Year 2 inspections undertaken by the Commission for Social Care Inspection is upon outcomes for service users, progress on meeting national minimum standards from Year 1 inspections. This inspection focuses on the areas that were identified for action and development at the last inspection, which took place in October 2003.

The majority of requirements and recommendations from the last inspection report have been met.

Statement of Purpose (Standard 1)

This standard was met. The statement of purpose clearly set out the services provided and contained the required information. A children's guide had recently been produced with involvement of children/young people. Children/young people had/were being issued a copy of the guide. The Managers intend to further develop the guide in different forms to meet the age range and needs of children in foster homes.

Fitness to provide or manage a fostering service (Standards 2-3)

2 standards assessed were fully met. A 2nd Service Manager took up post in February 2004, and a new Head of Service for the fostering and adoption teams came into post in June 2004, which has considerably strengthened management support within the fostering team. All three Managers have appropriate qualifications and extensive management experience in childcare and fostering.

Checks carried out showed that Derby City Council follows thorough procedures when recruiting new staff.

Management of the fostering service (Standards 4-5)

2 standards assessed were fully met. The fostering service was undergoing a programme of investment and improvements. Procedures for monitoring the performance and quality of the service were being strengthened. The service is well managed. Staff worked as a team and felt well supported by their Managers. Staff had responsibility for specific areas within the team, which worked well.

Securing and promoting welfare (Standards 6-14)

8 out of 9 standards assessed were fully met. Staff and carers showed a commitment to meeting the needs and welfare of children/young people. Although staff, carers and children reported that shortfalls and pressures within the children's teams was impacting on welfare issues. Children/young people in foster care felt cared for, and supported in maintaining contact with their family and friends. The Authority continues to make progress in how it consults with children and foster carers. Foster carers showed a commitment to ensuring that children and young people's views are heard and acted upon. The Authority intends to provide an appropriate complaints procedure for children/young people.

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

7 out of 9 standards assessed were fully met. Robust procedures are followed in relation to the recruitment of staff and foster carers. The service has an established staff team, and had recruited to post vacancies with the exception of one fulltime social worker post. Staff received a good level of support and felt valued by their Managers.

Work has been undertaken to further strengthen the assessment process for potential foster carers. The service was looking to recruit sessional workers to assist in the completion of assessments. The Authority recognizes that it does not have sufficient carers to enable choice of placement and fully meet the current demands on the service. The service has a clear recruitment strategy and is working hard to recruit additional carers, but this was short of the targets set. This has resulted in the need to place increasing numbers of children with independent Agencies.

Training opportunities for staff and carers had increased considerably over the last year. Although not all foster carers had attended recent training for various reasons. The service had identified the need to provide further training to ensure all carers have the skills to meet the needs of children and young people in their care. A dedicated training officer's post for carers was being advertised. This post will prove beneficial.

The service planned to set up a carers support scheme. The majority of carers stated that they received a good level of support from the fostering team. However several carers did not share this view. Not all carers felt entirely valued and appropriately reimbursed for the work they undertake.

Records (Standards 24-25)

1 out of 2 standards assessed were fully met. Carers and children's files examined mostly contained the required information, although two children's files did not contain a current placement/ health care plan.

The level of information recorded by foster carers varied. Staff were endeavouring to address this issue, and planned to provide further training for carers on record keeping. Foster carers assisted children to keep records and photographs of significant life events and life story work. Although staff and carers reported that due to pressures within the children's teams, not all social/social care workers had the time or skills to support completion of life story work with children.

Fitness of premises to use as a fostering service (Standard 26)

This standard was fully met. The office premises are suitable for the purpose.

Improvements had been made to the premises and levels of equipment. Although not all social workers had direct access to computers and e-mail. The Authority was undertaking a programme to upgrade the I.T. system and access to computers throughout all areas.

Additional storage facilities had been provided and confidential information was kept securely.

Financial requirements (Standards 27-29)

1 standard assessed was fully met. Derby City Council has a finance team and expertise to manage the finances and payments to foster carers. The Authority had significantly increased allowances and remunerations paid to foster carers in the last year, in response to the best value review and consultation with carers. Foster carers had been issued a copy of the revised allowances. Staff and foster carers welcomed recent increases in allowances and remunerations, but expressed the need for further increases to cover the full cost of caring for each child. The Local Authority intends to further increase the allowances in the forthcoming year in line with recommended allowances.

Fostering panel (Standard 30)

This standard was fully met. Policies and procedures on the functions of the fostering panel had been approved and were clearly set out. An information leaflet has been produced for new applicants about the role of the fostering panel.

The fostering panel had the required composition of panel members with the exception of independent members with expertise in education and child health and a foster carer from another agency. Agreement had been given to increase the fees paid to independent panel members to enable the service to recruit additional members. The panel members maintained an appropriate level of independence, although the need for further training on their role and functions was identified.

Foster carers training and development needs were not clearly linked and evaluated through the annual review process. The Managers were addressing this issue.

Short term breaks (Standard 31)

This standard was fully met. Policies and procedures relating to short-term breaks were provided. The service was looking to further develop respite and short break care for children and young people. The findings showed that the needs of children/young people receiving short-term breaks were being met. Carers providing short break care received a good level of support from the fostering team.

Family and friends as carers (Standard 32)

This standard was fully met. Clear policies and procedures were in place relating to family and friends as carers. The fostering service gives importance to supported family and friends as foster carers. Staff largely assess and approve family and friends as carers applying the same assessment procedures as other carers, taking into account their relationships with the

child. Carers received a good level of support from the fostering team.

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:

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	12	FS11	The Local Authority must produce an appropriate complaints procedure for children and young people, and ensure that children and young people are made aware of this.	31 May 2004
2	33	FS17	The Local Authority must provide sufficient numbers of suitable foster carers to meet children's needs.	30 September 2004
3	24	FS30	The independent fostering panel members must include a foster carer from another agency with two years experience.	30 September 2004

Action is being taken by the Commission for Social Care Inspection to monitor compliance with the above requirements.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS IDENTIFIED DURING THIS INSPECTION

Action Plan: The appropriate Officer of the Local Authority or the Registered Person (as applicable) is requested to provide the Commission with an Action Plan, which indicates how requirements are to be addressed. This action plan will be made available on request to the Area Office.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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

No.	Regulation	Standard *	Requirement	
1	20(3)(d) Schedule 1	FS3	Staff personnel files must: Clearly show that a satisfactory C.R.B certificate has been obtained to the required level. Contain a written explanation where there is a gap in the person's employment.	31 March 2005
2	12(2)(f)	FS11	The Authority must produce an appropriate complaints procedure for children/young people, and ensure that children/young people are made aware of this.	31 March 2005
3	17(3)	FS12	The Authority must ensure that a foster carer is given essential/updated information about a child's health needs, to enable them to appropriately care for the child.	31 December 2004
4	19	FS19	The Authority must provide sufficient numbers of suitable foster carers to meet children/young people's needs.	31 May 2005
5	17(1) 19	FS23	The Authority must promote that all foster carers receive appropriate training to ensure they have the skills to meet the needs of children/young people in their care.	31 May 2005

6	24(3)(d)	FS30	The independent fostering panel members must include a foster carer from another agency with two years experience.	31 March 2005
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GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THIS INSPECTION

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

No.	Refer to Standard *	Recommendation Action
1	FS1	The children's guide should be developed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To include additional information and illustrations ▪ In different forms to meet the age range and needs of children/young people.
2	FS3	Personal reference request forms should state whether the referee knows of any concerns regarding the suitability of the applicant to work with children, and if so to explain what these are.
3	FS4	Procedures and contract arrangements governing placements with independent fostering Agencies should be developed.
4	FS6	Health and safety risk assessments of carer's homes should clearly show that they have been reviewed prior to foster carers annual review. In circumstances where a child is required to share a room, which is not in their best interests, the outcome of the assessment should be clearly recorded on individual's files.
5	FS8	The service should continue to support that children receive well-planned placements and introductions to foster carers.
6	FS9	The Authority should provide an information booklet on safe-caring and protecting children. Children/young people should receive a copy of this.
7	FS13	The Authority should provide guidance on arrangements for children not attending full time education.
8	FS15	Staff personnel files should clearly show that telephone enquiries are made in follow up to obtaining written references for new staff.

9	FS20	Staff should receive regular planned appraisals from their line manager
10	FS22	Supervisory visit forms for carers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide a clear record as to the purpose and outcome of visits/meetings with carers ▪ Be signed by staff and carers
11	FS23	The service should further develop the post approval-training programme for foster carers.
12	FS23	Experienced foster carers should be further involved in the delivery of pre-approval training for new carers.
13	FS24	The service should take appropriate action to ensure that all children/young people have an up-to-date placement plan, which clearly shows how their needs are being met.
14	FS24	Further work should be undertaken to ensure that carers, children's social/ support workers have the skills and resources to support completion of life story work with children.
15	FS24	The service should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide further training for foster carers on record keeping requirements. ▪ Ensure all foster carers keep essential records of children in their care, and keep confidential information in a suitable secure area.
16	FS26	The Authority should review security to the building
17	FS26	The Authority should upgrade the I.T. system and access to computers within the fostering team.
18	FS29	The Authority should review the allowances and remunerations paid to foster carers to cover the full cost of caring for each child.
19	FS30	Policies and procedures on the functions of the fostering panel should detail: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The decision-making process when all members of the panel are not in agreement 2. The procedure for despatching confidential reports and minutes to panel members.
20	FS30	The independent members of the fostering panel should include expertise in education and in child health.

21	FS30	Panel members should receive further training in relation to their role and work.
22	FS30	Foster carers training and development should be linked and evaluated through their annual review.

* 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	13
Survey of placing authorities	YES
Foster carer survey	YES
Foster children survey	YES
Checks with other organisations and Individuals	YES
• Assistant Director of Social services	YES
• Child protection officer	YES
• Specialist advisor (s)	NA
• 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	YES
• Examination of files	YES
Individual interview with manager	YES
Information from provider	YES
Individual interviews with key staff	YES
Group discussion with staff	YES
Interview with panel chair	YES
Observation of foster carer training	NO
Observation of foster panel	YES
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Interview with individual child	YES
Date of Inspection	18/10/04
Time of Inspection	09.00
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	94

The following pages summarise the key findings and evidence from this inspection, together with the CSCI assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards have been met. The following scale is used to indicate the extent to which standards have been met or not met by placing the assessed level alongside the phrase "Standard met?"

The scale ranges from:

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

"0" in the "Standard met?" box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion.

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

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

Statement of Purpose

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

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

Standard 1 (1.1 - 1.6)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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Cabinet Members had approved the statement of purpose as a final document. The Inspectors found that the statement of purpose contained the required information, and clearly set out the services provided. Staff and foster carers had been issued a copy of the statement of purpose.

Staff confirmed that a children's guide had recently been produced with involvement of staff and young people. A copy had/was in the process of being issued to all carers, children and young people. The Inspectors found that the children's guide contained limited illustrations and information about what the service provides. The Managers planned to further develop the guide in different forms to further meet the age range and needs of children/young people in foster homes.

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
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The Assistant Director for Children's Services has overall responsibility for the fostering and adoption services. The Head of Service for fostering and adoption reports to the Assistant Director.

A 2nd Service Manager took up post in February 2004, and a new Head of Service for the Fostering and Adoption team came into post in June 2004 and which has considerably strengthened management support within the fostering team. The previous Head of Service also had responsibility for the disability service. This service is now managed separately.

A Head of Service and two Service Managers currently manage the fostering team. All three Managers have appropriate qualifications and extensive management experience in childcare and fostering. The Head of Service has a diploma in management studies.

The Inspectors found that there were heavy demands on the service to meet the high need for placements. The service is professionally managed. The Managers showed effective leadership of the team and the running of the service. Good communications were in place.

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

Checks carried out showed that Derby City Council follows thorough procedures when recruiting new staff. The Human Resources team based at Social Services office are responsible for carrying out the required checks and references in relation to new staff. Staff personnel files have been indexed to aid access to information.

Eight personnel files examined showed that required checks and information had been obtained for staff, with the exception of some long service staff. The following issues were highlighted:

- Records relating to staff criminal record bureau checks referred to police checks and did not show the level of check carried out i.e. enhanced level or include the person's criminal record bureau number.
- Different forms were used to request personal and professional references. The standard form used for personal references did not include the statement 'whether the referee knows of any concerns regarding the suitability of the applicant to work with children, and if so to explain what these are'.
- One file did not contain a written explanation where there was a gap in the person's employment.

Managers were clear about information required in respect of Schedule 1 of the Fostering Regulations, and their responsibility to ensure children's welfare is safeguarded.

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?
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Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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The team focuses specifically on fostering. The Inspectors found that fostering procedures had been approved; these were detailed and clearly set out.

The fostering service was undergoing a programme of investment and improvements. The Inspectors found that a number of significant changes and improvements had been made to the service since the last inspection.

The findings throughout the inspection showed that procedures for monitoring the performance and quality of the service were being strengthened. The Authority had produced a clear annual business and performance plan for the fostering service. An external review of the fostering service had recently been carried out, which looked at how the service was performing. The report was not available at the time of this inspection.

The Local Authority had identified the need to develop procedures and contract arrangements governing placements with independent fostering Agencies. Senior managers confirmed that a contract's officer had been appointed, who would be responsible for developing procedures.

Staff roles and responsibilities were clearly set out in job descriptions, and understood by staff. Clear procedures were in place for managing and monitoring staff caseloads. Staff interviewed and records examined showed that staff received regular recorded supervision.

The Heads of Service for fostering and assessment and planning were undertaking an audit in November of all children in the fostering service, to look at the viability of their placement plans.

The Inspectors found that procedures for recording and monitoring concerns and complaints about the service had been strengthened. Although information relating to Stage 1 complaints was not formally reported up to the local Authority.

The Service Managers had strengthened procedures for monitoring and forwarding relevant notifiable events to the Commission. A standard form had been produced for recording notifiable events.

Procedures were in place to require that staff and foster carers declare any possible conflicts of interests.

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

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

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.	3
Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.	3
Number of complaints made to Commission for Social Care Inspection about the agency in the past 12 months:	0
Number of complaints which were substantiated:	0

Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.4)		
The fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>The findings throughout the inspection showed that the fostering service is well managed within the constraints of resources and finances. Improved management support has strengthened the way in which the service is managed. Staff worked as a team and felt well supported by their Managers. Staff interviewed were clear as to their responsibilities and lines of accountability. Staff and the Service Managers had responsibility for specific areas within the team, which worked well. Two members of staff managed the majority of duty cover. Systems for managing duty cover had been further strengthened.</p> <p>Staff reported that work was being undertaken to improve communications and relationships with other departments including the child care teams. Regular meetings had been set up between the Head of Service for fostering and the children's teams, and monthly meetings were held with the adoption team.</p>		

Securing and Promoting Welfare

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 6 (6.1 - 6.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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The findings showed that foster carers provide a safe and nurturing environment. As part of the assessment of new foster carers, staff are required to complete a written risk assessment of the carer's home, to ensure it is safe and meets young peoples needs. The assessment includes checks on carers' transport, to ensure it is safe and suitable for a child's needs. Staff confirmed that they reviewed the health and safety risk assessment prior to foster carers annual review. However carer's files examined and reports presented at fostering panel did not clearly show this. The Managers had drafted a new report form for foster carers annual reviews, which referred to the health and safety assessment.

The foster carers Handbook clearly stated that children should not be expected to share a bedroom without their agreement. Carers who the Inspectors met were aware of this. Staff confirmed that due to pressures on the service, there were circumstances where a child was required to share a room, which was not in their best interests. It was apparent that staff had completed an assessment and put measures in place to safeguard the children. However the outcome of the assessment was not clearly shown on individual files.

Staff and foster carers reported that the pre-approval training for foster carers covers health and safety issues. The Foster Carers handbook provides clear guidance on health and safety matters and carers responsibilities.

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

Feedback from carers and records examined showed that the service promotes diversity and equality within the resources available. Records showed that the matching process takes into account a child's cultural, religious, language, and disability needs. A small number of placements were not entirely appropriate to the child's cultural needs, although careful consideration had been given to meeting their needs.

Carers confirmed that pre-approval training covered the need to promote diversity and respect other cultures and religions. Staff had identified the need for training on different religious beliefs and cultures. Some information had been made available to staff, and the Manager was looking into training available.

Discussions with children and carers and completed questionnaires confirmed that carers encourage children to develop skills and lead as full a life as possible. Foster carers who the Inspectors met showed a commitment to enhancing children's confidence and self worth. The service was looking to provide further training for foster carers on enhancing children's confidence and self worth.

Staff and carers reported that children/young people are encouraged to pursue their interests and hobbies. Discussions with children and completed questionnaires confirmed this.

Staff reported some difficulties in obtaining essential equipment for link foster carers, who were caring for a child/children with a physical disability.

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

Discussions with staff and records examined showed that considerable work goes into ensuring that children are appropriately matched with foster carers, capable of meeting her/his assessed needs. The importance of matching is stressed in the policies and procedures. Children and carers' files examined contained matching considerations. The findings showed that high demand for placements, limited resources and information from children's social worker affects the matching process. The service acknowledges that it does not have a sufficient range of carers to meet the current demand for placements. This has resulted in increased numbers of placements within independent fostering Agencies

over the last year. The Inspectors found that independent Agencies are required to provide evidence of matching considerations between carers and children placed.

Children and foster carers reported that where placements are planned, they are generally given the opportunity to get to know each other prior to making a decision about the placement. Although returned questionnaires from carers indicated that pressures on children's social/social care workers, affected time available for planning introductions.

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 works to Derby City Child Protection Policy and Procedures. The foster carers Agreement and the new carers Handbook clearly set out carers role and responsibilities in regards to protecting children. Staff and foster carers confirmed that they had received training on child protection. Records showed that several training sessions had recently been held on child protection; a good number of foster carers had attended this.

Discussions with children and returned questionnaires indicated that children felt safe in their foster home. The new foster carer's Handbook includes information on safe caring. Staff and foster carers confirmed that the pre-approval programme covered safe care issues. Fosters carers files, with the exception of long standing carers contained a safe caring policy for their household. Staff reported that this is reviewed as part of the foster carer's annual review, although this was not clearly evidenced on annual review reports presented at fostering panel. The Managers were addressing this issue.

Staff reported that children did not receive written information on safe-caring and safeguarding children.

Carers who met with the Inspectors were aware of the vulnerability of children in care in relation to bullying. The Inspectors found that Authority provides a clear anti-bullying policy. The carers' Handbook contained information on this.

The carer's Handbook and foster Carers Agreement makes clear to foster carers that use of corporal punishment is not acceptable and outlines acceptable methods of discipline and managing behaviour.

The Inspectors noted that the foster carers Handbook contained a clear procedure relating to a child missing from home.

The Managers reported that all children aged 11 years and above had access to a computer. Internet access was in line with the Local Authority procedures.

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

0

%

Standard 10 (10.1 – 10.9)

The fostering service makes sure that each child or young person in foster care is encouraged to maintain and develop family contacts and friendships as set out in her/his care plan and/or foster placement agreement.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The Local Authority provides a detailed policy on promoting contact. The findings throughout the inspection showed that children are encouraged to maintain and develop family contacts and friendships, where there are no contact restrictions.

Care plans examined clearly set out contact arrangements for the child/young person. Where contact visits were supervised, the worker completed a report of the contact visit. Children's files showed that contact with family and friend's is reviewed at statutory reviews.

Carers' responsibility for supporting children to maintain contact with family members and other significant persons was clearly set out in the foster carer Agreement and carers Handbook. Carers who the Inspectors met showed a clear commitment to maintaining links with the child's family and friends. Carers confirmed that the Authority paid transport and costs incurred to support contact.

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

The Inspectors found positive examples of children's views being heard and acted upon in placement. The findings throughout the inspection showed that the Authority continues to make progress in how it consults with children and foster carers. Several consultation exercises had been carried out, asking children/young people and foster carers about the service and matters affecting their daily lives. Various changes had been made in response to comments received. The Authority acknowledges that it does not actively obtain the views of children with communication difficulties, and intends to look at ways to improve this shortfall.

The Local Authority has a children's participation officer, who was involved in various projects involving looked after children and young people. A children's reference group was established, which includes young people who have been, or who are currently being looked after in care. One of the Inspectors attended a group meeting, which provided a good forum for young people's views to be heard.

The Authority circulates a regular newsletter to children and foster carers.

The carers Handbook clearly states the need to ensure that children's opinions and those of their families are sought over issues. Carers showed a commitment to ensuring that children and young people's views are heard and acted upon. Although a number of returned

questionnaires from children and carers indicated that not all children's social/social care workers have enough time to consult with them about matters affecting their daily life and future.

Staff confirmed that all children aged 11 years and over had access to a computer in their foster home. A programme to provide computers in all foster homes was in progress. Carezone site was due to be launched, which will provide comprehensive information for looked after children, and opportunities to communicate via safe and supervised chat rooms. It will also provide opportunities to contact social workers and managers directly.

The Authority had recently appointed a third Reviewing Officer to chair children's statutory reviews. Children were being encouraged to attend their reviews. Records showed that placement reviews were generally completed within the required timescales.

The service works to Derby City Local Authority complaints procedure. The service has identified the need to provide an appropriate complaints procedure for children and young people. Complaints from children were referred to the children's participation officer. A customer support manager and a complaints officer had recently been appointed. They were completing a review of the department's complaints system. The managers had yet to establish links with the complaints officer.

Twenty out of thirty two returned questionnaires from children indicated that they were aware of how to make a complaint, and contact the Commission for Social Care Inspection. The Inspectors found that the new children's guide contained details of various Agencies children could contact if they were unhappy, including the Commission. A copy of the children's guide had/was being issued to all children and young people in foster homes.

A children's advocacy service was being set up; staff involved in this service were not employees of the Authority. This service was in the early stages of development.

Returned questionnaires indicated that the majority of children and young people see themselves as being part of the foster carer's family.

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

Accounts from staff, carers and children and records examined maintained that children's health needs were being met. The carer's Handbook outlines foster carers responsibilities for promoting children's health.

Several foster carers expressed concerns that information relating to a child's health needs was not always forthcoming from their social/social care worker. Two children's files examined did not contain full information relating to the child's health needs, and one file did not contain signed consent to emergency treatment. However the child's foster carer confirmed that they had obtained signed consent, following request from the child's social worker. The Inspectors found that new health care plans on children's files were well completed.

Staff and carers reported considerable delays in accessing mental health services for children/young people, where required. Senior managers reported that additional resources were being allocated.

Staff reported that work was being undertaken to further develop links with health agencies. Foster carers and staff confirmed that carers received basic training in health issues. Relevant health staff had agreed to provide training to carers on communicable diseases, health promotion and first aid.

The Inspectors found that the foster carer's Handbook contained clear guidelines for dispensing medicine to children and young people.

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 Inspectors found that importance is given to meeting the educational needs of children or young people in foster care. The service works closely with the Gatsby project, which provides an educational support service for looked after children, both in and outside school activities.

Carers were clear as to their role and responsibilities in supporting a child or young persons educational needs. The carers' Handbook clearly states what is expected from the carers in relation to children's' educational needs. Interviews with carers and returned questionnaires maintained that carers help children to complete their homework, and were in close contact

with the child's school.

Where possible children were placed in close proximity to their own home and school. The Managers reported that all children/young people in foster homes were attending full time education, with the exception of a couple of children who were attending school on a part time basis. Written guidance was not available on arrangements for children not attending full time education. Staff reported ongoing difficulties where children who were not in full time education, in regards to additional pressure on carers and the service.

Foster placement agreements set out a child's educational needs. The new foster carers Handbook set out where financial responsibility lies for additional school costs such as trips and equipment.

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
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The Inspectors found that policies and procedures were provided for preparing young people towards semi and independent living. Foster carers showed a commitment to helping young people to develop independent and daily living skills. Carers gave examples on how this was being achieved. The carer's Handbook provides guidance on what is expected of carers in terms of preparing young children for independent or semi-independent living. The Inspectors found that a pathway plan had been started for one young person who was approaching 16 years of age.

Staff reported that pre-approval training for foster carers covered preparation for adult living.

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

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 15 (15.1 - 15.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The findings throughout this inspection showed that staff working for the fostering service were suitable to work with children and young people. Social workers have an appropriate qualification and considerable childcare knowledge and experience.

The Service Managers confirmed that they carried out telephone enquires to follow up written references, although this was not clear in personnel files examined.

The Managers reported that social workers had received recent training to further strengthen the assessment of potential foster carers.

Total number of staff of the service:

19

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

1

Standard 16 (16.1 - 16.16)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The Inspectors found that procedures to determine, prioritise and monitor workloads had been strengthened. The findings throughout the inspection showed that staff were effectively managed.

The Inspectors found that recruitment practices and procedures for monitoring completion of assessments of potential foster carers had been strengthened. A new referral and tracking form had been put in place for registering foster carers interest.

The fostering team clerks had moved into the team offices to strengthen administrative

support and communications within the teams.

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
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The service has an established staff team. The service had recruited to post vacancies, with the exception of one fulltime social worker post. The Authority was endeavouring to recruit to this position. Two members of staff were on maternity leave, and members of staff within the team were working additional hours to help cover their duties.

The Inspectors found that clear procedures were in place relating to the assessment of potential foster carers. Work had been undertaken to further strengthen the assessment process. Completed assessments were detailed and combined competencies, evidence and analysis. Files examined showed that necessary checks had been carried out to ensure that applicants are suitable people to work with children and young people. Although the Inspectors found some inconsistencies as to what documents were kept on carer's file regarding their identity. The Managers were addressing this issue.

Staff reported that staffing vacancies, current workloads and demand for placements limited time available to complete assessments of potential new foster carers. The service was looking to recruit sessional workers to assist in the completion of Form F assessments.

The Authority recognizes that it does not have sufficient carers to enable choice of placement and fully meet the current demands on the service. The Authority has a clear recruitment strategy and was endeavouring to address the shortfall of carers through the recruitment strategy and ongoing recruitment campaign, although the number of carers recruited in the last year fell short of the targets set.

This has resulted in the need to place increasing numbers of children with independent fostering Agencies. At the time of the inspection 41 children were placed with independent fostering Agencies.

Despite the pressures on local authority placements, use of exemptions and numbers of carers with more than three foster children in placement had reduced in the last year.

The Authority is determined to remain the major provider of fostering services in Derby, but faces considerable challenges to recruit, retain and support carers to improve its current standing. The Authority planned to establish a contract care scheme, which will recruit foster carers who have additional skills to care for children who have extensive needs.

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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

Interviews with staff and carers and files examined showed that the service follows thorough employment practices in relation to staff and foster carers. The Authority provides a clear policy on Whistle Blowing. This was available to staff and included in the foster carers Handbook. Staff interviewed informed the Inspectors that their Managers provide a good level of support.

Foster carers were aware of the out of hours support available to them. The Managers confirmed that the service registers all foster carers on approval with 'Fostering Network'. Discussions with carers supported this.

Standard 19 (19.1 - 19.7)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The Managers were committed to staff training; there was a clear plan for the training and development of staff within the team. Staff reported that the department's induction programme had been adapted around staff's needs. Newly appointed staff to the team stated that they had received a good level of support and had completed the department's induction programme. Records supported this.

Staff reported that opportunities for training had increased considerably over the last year. This included access to training provided by the department, other professionals and external courses. Interviews with staff and records examined showed that staff had attended a good range of training in the last year. Full and part-time staff had access to appropriate post qualification training courses. Staff confirmed that training specific to the teams needs had been provided. Staff and carers reported that opportunities to attend joint training had increased. Staff reported that their training needs are discussed in supervision. Records supported this. Staff confirmed that an annual appraisal system was not currently in place.

Staff reported that procedures were in place to keep them informed of relevant changes in legislation and practice relevant to their work.

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)

All staff are properly accountable and supported.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

Staff interviewed felt well supported and valued by their Managers. Staff informed the Inspectors that they enjoyed their work and worked as a team. This was evident on inspection. As previously stated, there were clear lines of accountability within the team.

Interviews with staff and records examined showed that staff were receiving monthly supervision. Staff supervision records were well-structured, clear and concise and covered training and development needs. Staff received a copy of their supervision meetings. Staff reported that an annual appraisal system was not in place.

Minutes of team meetings seen on inspection were clear and concise. All members of staff have the opportunity to attend and contribute to team meetings.

Standard 21 (21.1 - 21.6)**The fostering service has a clear strategy for working with and supporting carers.****Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****3**

The findings showed that staff were committed to supporting carers and maintaining children's placements. Discussions with staff and returned questionnaires from Placing Officers showed that staff within the fostering team, worked closely with children's social/social care workers. Staff reported that due to pressures within the children's teams, they are often required to undertake duties beyond their lines of responsibility.

The Inspectors found that the service has a clear strategy for working with and supporting foster carers, which was understood by staff and carers. This included arrangements for training, supervision, out of hour's support and reviews. Several carers reported that they had used the out of hours support service, and found this to be beneficial. Several carers commented that they had established support links with other carers on an informal basis. Senior managers planned to set up a carer support scheme, where each carer will have a person they know to provide regular respite care.

Carers who the Inspectors met were clear as to the role of the supervising social worker. Carer who the Inspectors met stated that they were receiving a good level of support from their support worker.

Carers and staff confirmed that that the foster carers support group had arranged some social events, to which staff, children/young people and carers were invited to attend. However the carers support group was not well attended, and regular meetings were currently not being held. Senior Managers were keen to develop the support networks for foster carers.

Carers confirmed that the service provides a regular newsletter, which contains a good level of information. Carers and children are encouraged to provide items for the newsletter.

Standard 22 (22.1 - 22.10)

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

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

The findings showed that the majority of foster carers felt well supported by the fostering service. However a small number of carers did not fully share this view. Not all carers felt fully valued in their work and appropriately reimbursed for the work they undertake.

A new foster carers Handbook had been produced and a copy had/was being issued to all foster carers. The Inspectors found that the new Handbook contained an excellent level of information and was well set out and indexed. The foster carers' Handbook gives clear information about support, training and supervisory visits.

Interviews with carers and returned questionnaires maintained that carers received regular supervisory visits from their support worker. A clear form was provided for recording visits/meetings with carers. Although not all records provided a clear record as to the purpose and outcome of visits/meetings, or had been signed by carers. Not all carers received a summary of supervision meetings. Records showed that staff mainly carry out announced visits to foster carer's homes, although some unannounced visits are made. Carers confirmed this.

Foster carers had recently been issued a copy of the new foster carer Agreement, which was clear and concise and included information listed in Schedule 5 of the Fostering Regulations.

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?****2**

The findings showed that pre-and post approval training for foster carers had been strengthened. The pre-approval training programme had been updated. The service had purchased the new fostering network training pack, which contains material to further strengthen pre-approval training. Prospective foster carers are required to complete the preparation-training programme, which is provided over four days. All carers who the Inspectors met stated that they had received a good level of training, advice and support. Staff had identified the need to involve experienced carers more in the delivery of pre-approval training.

Staff and carers reported that opportunities for post approval training had increased considerably over the last year. This included access to training provided by the department, other professionals and external courses. The Managers confirmed that 37 foster carers had successfully achieved N.V.Q. Level 3 training in childcare, and that further carers intended to

undertake this. It was evident that the service has provided a good range of training for foster carers in the last year. However for various reasons not all carers had attended recent training and development. Staff were endeavouring to address this issue. The service had identified the need to provide further training to ensure all carers have the skills to meet the needs of children and young people in their care. The Managers had set up various training events for carers over the forthcoming months. A dedicated training officer's post for foster carers was being advertised, who will have responsibility for developing post approval training for carers. This post will prove beneficial. Staff confirmed that carers complete an evaluation form of training attended, which helps evaluate the effectiveness of training.

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

The Local Authority had a detailed policy and procedures on recording and standards of record keeping. Nine children's and six foster carer's files were reviewed as part of the case tracking process. Improvements had been made to the standard of record keeping in carers and children's files. Foster carers files were well set out and indexed, although this did not apply to all children's files.

Seven out of nine children's files examined contained a good level of information about children/young persons needs. Although two children's files did not contain a current placement and health care plan. It was acknowledged that one of the children was receiving respite care and was not a 'looked after' child. However the child's file contained limited information about his needs.

Records showed that children had an allocated social/social care worker and were generally receiving the required statutory reviews. Several returned questionnaires from foster carers and children indicated that apart from their reviews, some children had limited contact with their social/social care worker.

As previously stated, the Head of Service for fostering and assessment and planning were undertaking an audit in November of all children in the fostering service, to look at the viability of placement plans.

Discussions with carers and records showed that a number of carers had recently attended training on life story work, and that further training was planned. The Inspectors found some good examples where children had been assisted to complete life story work. However carers and staff expressed concern that due to pressures within the children's teams, not all social/ social care workers had the time or skills to support completion of life story work with children. The Inspectors found that carers enabled children to keep records and photographs of significant life events.

The Inspectors found that the level of information recorded by carers varied. Not all carers were keeping essential records of children in their care, and had a suitable secure box to

store confidential information in. Staff were endeavouring to address this issue. The service had started to issue files to new carers to record information about children in their care. The new foster carers Handbook clearly sets out what records carers were required to keep. The Managers planned to provide further training for foster carers on record keeping.

Standard 25 (25.1 - 25.13)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The team's administrative staff were relocated within the team offices to strengthen clerical support communications. Staff had established good systems to ensure the service is well run. Administration time will be more effectively used once the I.T. system is updated and operational throughout the fostering team.

The Inspectors found that the required information is kept. A policy and procedure on keeping confidential information and records was provided. Additional lockable storage facilities have been provided, although not all desks provided a lockable storage area. This was being addressed. Staff confirmed that confidential information was stored securely out of office hours.

The Authority had a policy and procedure for children, parents and carers to access their records. The new foster carer Handbook referred to carers' rights to access their records.

Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:	160
Number of placements made by the agency in the last 12 months:	X
Number of placements made by the agency which ended in the past 12 months:	X
Number of new foster carers approved during the last 12 months:	24
Number of foster carers who left the agency during the last 12 months:	23
Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £	82.58
Maximum £	271.31

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
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The office building is shared facilities with the adoption team and children's disability team. The Authority was looking to relocate the children's disability team, which will provide additional office space for the fostering service.

Discussions with staff and a tour of the premises showed that the offices used by the fostering team are adequate for the purpose. Since the last inspection the offices had been redecorated and a new carpet and some new desks and chairs have been provided. The Managers confirmed that further desks and chairs were being delivered. Staff reported that security to aspects of the building, such as some of the windows and side entrance door required strengthening. External areas required painting.

Staff expressed concern regarding limited access to computers and e-mail, restricting access to essential information and communication with other professionals. Senior Managers reported that the Authority was undertaking a programme to upgrade the I.T. system and access to computers throughout all areas, and provide training for staff.

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?	0
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This standard was not fully assessed on this inspection.

The Managers confirmed that the Authority had a dedicated finance team who had responsibility for managing the financial viability of the service. The budget is administered in line with the Authority 's financial procedures. The Authority operates to Derby City Council's financial and accounting 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?	0
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This standard was not fully assessed on this inspection.

The Authority produces an annual business plan, and has a finance team and expertise to manage the finances and payments to foster carers. Financial procedures are in place. The accounts are regularly audited.

Standard 29 (29.1 - 29.2)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

The Authority has a policy and procedures for foster carer payments and expenses. A team of staff administers the payments and allowances to carers. Interviews with foster carers and returned questionnaires indicated that payments are generally paid promptly. A financial audit was being carried out in regards to payments to carers.

Staff and foster carers confirmed that the department had significantly increased allowances and remunerations paid to foster carers in the last year, in response to the best value review and consultation with carers. Foster carers had been issued a copy of the revised allowances. The new foster carers Handbook clearly set out additional allowances, including mileage and special allowance payments. Staff and foster carers welcomed recent increases in allowances and remunerations, but expressed the need for further increases to cover the full cost of caring for each child. Senior Managers confirmed that the Local Authority intends to further increase the allowances in the forthcoming year in line with 'fostering network' recommended allowances.

Fostering Panels

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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The service has its own fostering panel. The Assistant Director of Children's Services is the 'decision maker'. He does not attend the fostering panel. The Inspectors found that the fostering panel had the required composition of panel members with the exception of independent members with expertise in education and child health and a foster carer from another agency. The Head of Service reported that agreement had been given to increase the fees paid to independent panel members to enable the service to recruit additional members.

Policies and procedures on the functions of the fostering panel had been approved, and were clearly set out. The fostering procedures did not detail the decision-making process when all members of the panel are not in agreement, or the procedure for despatching confidential reports and minutes to panel members. Staff confirmed that panel papers were sent out by a safe mail system, which ensures the papers are delivered to the relevant persons. Administrative staff within the team were taking on the job of taking the minutes at panel, and were due to attend training on this.

Panel members confirmed that they had received further training in relation to the current standards and regulations. The Panel Chair was due to attend external training on chairing of fostering panels. The new Head of Service was taking on the role of panel advisor, and had identified the need for further training in relation to panel member's role and work. The Inspectors shared this view. Panel members maintained an appropriate level of independence. The inspectors found that foster carers training and development needs were not fully evaluated and linked through the annual review process. Reports presented to the fostering panel did not clearly cover areas such as safe caring, training attended over the last year or further training needs. The Managers had identified the need to clearly show this and had produced a new annual report form, which included this information.

Records indicated that a satisfactory C.R.B. check had been obtained for panel members.

Staff confirmed that foster carers could now attend their initial approval and annual review at panel. An information leaflet had been produced for new applicants about the role of the fostering panel. This information was included in the foster carers Handbook.

Discussions with panel members and previous panel minutes confirmed that annual reviews of all carers, requests for deferment of annual reviews, all exemptions to carer's approval, child protection issues, de-registration of carers and financial requests are routinely presented at panel. This is to be commended as good practice.

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?	3
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The service provides respite care for children cared for by other foster carers, and short break care for children with a disability who live with their family. The Managers confirmed that the team was looking to further develop these services.

Staff and carers were clear that for short-term care, the child's birth parents remained the main carers for their child and retained all legal responsibilities. Accounts from carers and children and returned questionnaires maintained that the needs of children/young persons receiving short-term breaks were being met. Carers stated that they were satisfied with the level of support they received from the fostering team.

The fostering team intends to strengthen the range of training available to carers who provide short-term care, on appointment of a dedicated training officer.

Policies and procedures relating to short-term breaks were provided.

Family and Friends as Carers

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.4)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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The Inspectors found that clear policies and procedures were in place relating to family and friends as carers. The findings showed that the fostering service gives importance to supported family and friends as foster carers. Staff largely assess and approve family and friends as carers applying the same assessment procedures as other carers, taking into account their relationships with the child.

Family and friends approved as carers reported that they received a good level of support from the fostering team, and were encouraged to attend the pre-approval training. The fostering service had identified the need to modify training around the needs of family and friends approved as carers.

PART C

LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY

(where applicable)

Lay Assessor _____ **Signature** _____
Date _____

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

We would welcome comments on the content of this report relating to the Inspection conducted on 18-22 October 2004 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

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

Amendments to the report were necessary	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Comments were received from the provider	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
Provider comments/factual amendments were incorporated into the final inspection report	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Provider comments are available on file at the Area Office but have not been incorporated into the final inspection report. The inspector believes the report to be factually accurate	<input type="checkbox"/> YES

Note:

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

D.2 Please provide the Commission with a written Action Plan by _____, 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"/> YES
Action plan was received at the point of publication	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
Action plan did not cover all the statutory requirements and required further discussion	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Provider has declined to provide an action plan	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Other: <enter details here>	<input type="checkbox"/> NO

Public reports

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

D.3 PROVIDER'S AGREEMENT

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

D.3.1 I _____ 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.

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