



Making Social Care  
Better for People

# inspection report

Fostering Services

## **Foster Care Associates**

Ashdell Grove

60 Westbourne Road

Sheffield

S10 2QU

28th/29th/30th January 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?**

NO

**Name of Authority**

**Address**

**Local Authority Manager**

**Tel No:**

**Address**

**Fax No:**

**Email Address**

**Registered Fostering Agency (IFA)**

YES

**Name of Agency**

Foster Care Associates

**Tel No**

01142 813363

**Address**

Ashdell Grove, 60 Westbourne Road, Sheffield, S10 2QU

**Fax No**

01142 813364

**Email Address**

lynda.Kenny@thefca.co.uk

**Registered Number of IFA**

**Name of Registered Provider**

Foster Care Associates Limited

**Name of Registered Manager (if applicable)**

Mrs Lynda Kenny

**Date of first registration**

16<sup>th</sup> January 2004

**Date of latest registration certificate**

16<sup>th</sup> January 2004

**Registration Conditions Apply ?**

NO

**Date of last inspection**

18/2/03

<b>Date of Inspection Visit</b>		28th January 2004	<b>ID Code</b>
<b>Time of Inspection Visit</b>		09:00 am	
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>1</b>	Sue Turner	074617
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>2</b>	Joanne Knight	
<b>Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable)</b> Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the NCSC. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process.		N/A	
<b>Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)</b>		N/A	
<b>Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection</b>		Sally Melbourne – Deputy Director	

**Introduction to Report and Inspection**

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**Reports and Notifications to the Local Authority and Secretary of State**

**Implementation of Statutory Requirements from last Inspection**

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**Good Practice Recommendations from this Inspection**

**Part B: Inspection Methods & Findings**

**(National Minimum Standards For Fostering Services)**

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- 2. Fitness to carry on or manage a fostering service**
- 3. Management of the fostering service**
- 4. Securing and promoting welfare**
- 5. Recruiting, checking, managing, supporting and training staff and foster carers**
- 6. Records**
- 7. Fitness of premises**
- 8. Financial requirements**
- 9. Fostering panels**
- 10. Short-term breaks**
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**Part D: Provider's Response**

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**D.2. Action Plan**

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## INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

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

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

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

The report will show the following:

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

This report is a public document.

## INSPECTION VISITS

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

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED.

Foster Care Associates (FCA) is a UK wide organisation offering high quality family placements, at a local level, to children and young people who are 'looked after' by local authorities.

FCA provides opportunities for 'looked after' children and young people to achieve their full potential and to live fulfilling lives in the community.

Foster Care Associates focuses on providing a service to children and young people who are sometimes described by referring local authorities as 'difficult to place'. This is not a description that FCA particularly welcomes or seeks to define but it is useful in emphasising that the agency receives referrals for placement of children and young people, who have complex and complicated histories.

These children and young people make considerable demands of foster carers and the placements require intensive support.

## PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

### Inspector's Summary

This was the fostering services second inspection by the National Care Standards Commission under the Care Standards Act 2000. The Fostering Services National Minimum Standards and Regulations were referred to throughout this inspection.

It is acknowledged by the inspectors that the agency had addressed the issues raised at the previous inspection and had used the inspection process as an opportunity to develop the services they provided to the children and young people in their care. The inspectors found very good standards of care being provided by a committed group of staff and foster carers. The senior managers, staff and carers have embraced the inspection and have demonstrated a commitment to the process.

#### **Statement of Purpose (Standard 1)**

**This standard was not met.**

The agency had a Statement of Purpose, which clearly set out all of the information as required by the fostering services National Minimum Standards and Regulations.

The statement of purpose checked by the inspectors did not accurately reflect the organisational structure or further local information.

Staff spoken to said they were not involved in the review of the children's guide as this was dealt with by placement manager.

#### **Fitness to provide or manage a fostering service (Standard 2 and 3)**

**One of the two standards was met.**

As part of the registration process checks had been obtained and verified in respect of the manager.

Since the previous inspection a number of organisational changes have been made which have resulted in the current registered manager being more 'detached' from operational issues, this was confirmed by staff who said that her role was primarily strategic and managing directors in other regions. The agency has recognised this and the director of Yorks and Lincs undertakes the role of manager. The director has not applied to the National Care Standards Commission (NCSC) to register.

#### **Management of a fostering service (Standard 4 and 5)**

**Both standards were met.**

Since the last inspection the extent of the work undertaken within each local office had increased. This included the provision of training locally instead of centrally. Additionally the number of carers and supervising social workers had increased.

Staff interviewed said that the business plan stated that the organisation were looking for extra premises. This would mean that 2 of the local offices would be responsible for a "sub office". The deputy director confirmed that this would be dependent on financial viability.

In light of the above information the NCSC are in negotiation with the agency to establish if the local offices are defined as 'branches' and therefore subject to registration.

#### **Securing and promoting welfare (Standard 6 to 14)**

**7 of the 9 standards were met.**

The inspectors visited three foster homes as part of the inspection process. These included the homes of foster carers in Hull and Lincoln. Those seen all provided a safe, healthy and nurturing environment that could comfortably accommodate all who lived there. All homes seen were warm, furnished, decorated and maintained to a good standard of cleanliness.



The service had in place a system for both identifying and compensating for any gaps in the match between the child and the carer.

Carers confirmed that they had received training around self-caring, managing difficult behaviour and maintaining the child's self esteem. Not all carers had received training in bullying and non-violent intervention.

Carers confirmed that they had received training and support regarding the requirement for them to encourage and aid contact with birth family and friends. Financial support was provided to cover the cost of transport and other expenses incurred.

The inspectors saw a file titled 'Children's Comments – The Voice of a Child'. This contained feedback from young people regarding holidays, children's forum, parties and social events.

It was evident in discussions with managers and staff of the agency that there was a great amount of enthusiasm shown about the comments received from young people.

The education of looked after children was a high priority for Foster Care Associates and the agency were proud of statistics that showed the majority of their children and young people (around 95%) were in full time mainstream or special education provision.

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

#### **6 of the 9 standards were met.**

The inspectors checked the recruitment files of four members of staff. All contained the required details.

All social work staff had appropriate qualifications and during staff interviews it was evident that they each had the knowledge and skills to carry out their responsibilities.

Criminal Records Bureau checks (CRB), at enhanced level had been carried out on three members of staff. The fourth staff member was employed prior to April 2002 and had therefore had police checks carried out. These checks had only asked for information relating to the staff member in one name and not in other names previously used.

The upper most reason for the foster parents continuing to work with the agency was the feeling of worth and professionalism that was bestowed on them by all members of the staff team that they came into contact with.

#### **Records (Standards 24 and 25)**

##### **1 of the two standards was met.**

The service made positive attempts to ensure that carers received all available and relevant information. The children's case records were well maintained, indexed and information was easily retrievable. There was evidence that information was shared between the supervising social worker and the child's social worker to ensure that there was good integration of information stored in the respective files.

Records of complaints and allegations were kept on relevant files and there was a system in place to bring together this data.

#### **Fitness of premises for use as a fostering service (Standard 26)**

##### **This standard was met.**

The inspectors visited three office premises. All were appropriately sized, well furnished and clean. The inspectors found a friendly and welcoming atmosphere in all offices visited. Four supervising social workers interviewed confirmed that a competent and supportive administration team was in place within the service and that in the main, the office was sufficiently equipped with the necessary items.

#### **Financial requirements (Standard 27 to 29)**

##### **The three standards were met.**

The deputy director confirmed in the pre inspection information that the agency was financially viable and had sufficient financial resources to fulfil its obligations.

She also stated that they had sound financial procedures and the directors regularly reviewed budgets.

The fostering agency publishes its charges for their services in the prospectus.

The information seen by the inspectors clearly detailed the charges for a range of placements and any additional services they provided.

**Fostering panels (Standard 30)**

**This standard was met.**

It was not possible for the inspectors to observe the fostering panel, as part of the inspection process. However following staff interviews, reading information from the pre inspection questionnaire and prior knowledge of the fostering panel from the previous inspection the inspectors were confident that this standard was met.

**Short-term breaks (Standard 31)**

**This standard was not applicable.**

**Family and friends as carers (Standard 32)**

**This standard was not applicable.**

## **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.	15	FS12	Written health care records for each child placed must be maintained, that children can access and understand.	1.8.04

**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.

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Compliance</b>	
N/A		
<b>Comments</b>		

<b>Lead Inspector</b>	<b>Sue Turner</b>	<b>Signature</b>	_____
<b>Second Inspector</b>	<b>Joanne Knight</b>	<b>Signature</b>	_____
<b>Locality Manager</b>	<b>Joanne Knight</b>	<b>Signature</b>	_____
<b>Date</b>	<b>30<sup>TH</sup> January 2004</b>		

## STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS IDENTIFIED DURING THIS INSPECTION

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

### STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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

No.	Regulation	Standard *	Requirement	
1.	4	FS1	The statement of purpose must be kept under review and revised as appropriate.	1.8.04
2.	Care Standards Act Part II Section 11	FS2	The person managing the agency must apply to register.	1.4.04
3.	17	FS23	All foster carers must be offered all training as stated in the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services.	31.12.04
3.	20	FS15	Staff employed prior to April 2002 must have a CRB check completed. The checks completed for them prior to this do not take into account all previous names used by the person.	1.4.04
4.	22	FS24	All records relating to each child/young person must be dated and signed.	1.4.04

### GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THIS INSPECTION

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

No.	Refer to Standard *	Recommendation Action
1.	FS1	Staff should be fully consulted about any review and update of the statement of purpose and children's guide.
2.	FS8	Carers should be aware of all details relating to their approval.
3.	FS14	The agency should continue to develop service provision in relation to leaving care arrangements for young people.
4.	FS16	Computers should be available to those staff that would prefer to type reports and utilize the e-mail system.
5.	FS23	Training referred to in the National Minimum Standards for Fostering should be included in the induction and/or core training.

**PART B****INSPECTION METHODS & FINDINGS**

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

Number of Inspector days spent	3
Survey of placing authorities	YES
Foster carer survey	YES
Foster children survey	YES
Checks with other organisations and Individuals	YES
• 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	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	NO
Information from provider	YES
Individual interviews with key staff	YES
Group discussion with staff	NO
Interview with panel chair	NO
Observation of foster carer training	NO
Observation of foster panel	NO
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Interview with individual child	YES
Date of Inspection	28/1/04
Time of Inspection	10.30AM
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	36



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

The scale ranges from:

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

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

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

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

## Statement of Purpose

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

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

### Standard 1 (1.1 - 1.6)

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

### Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

The agency had a Statement of Purpose, which clearly set out all of the information as required by the fostering services National Minimum Standards and Regulations. The pre inspection information stated that this was currently under review to reflect some organisational changes and include more information about Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. Staff spoken to during the inspection process were unsure if the review had taken place. The statement of purpose checked by the inspectors did not accurately reflect the organisational structure or further local information. Staff and carers spoken to all felt that the statement of purpose accurately reflected the fostering services policies and procedures. A children's guide was available for all children fostered through the agency. The guide had been produced in a 'filofax style', which was very user friendly and fashionable. The guide contained information on how to complain, children's rights, education, therapy, telephone numbers and other useful information and reference particulars. Staff spoken to said they were not involved in the review of the children's guide as this was dealt with by placement manager.

## 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?

2

Since the previous inspection a number of organisational changes have been made which have resulted in the current registered manager being more 'detached' from operational issues, this was confirmed by staff who said that her role was primarily strategic and managing directors in other regions. The agency has recognised this and the director of Yorks and Lincs undertakes the role of manager. The director has not applied to the National Care Standards Commission (NCSC) to register.

The current registered manager has the necessary knowledge and experience of childcare and fostering to manage the service and its staff. She has a Diploma in Social Work and Diploma in Higher Education and is currently undertaking a Diploma in Management Studies.

### 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

As part of the registration process checks had been obtained in respect of the manager, including a CRB check at enhanced level, a C.V, with full employment history, a medical assessment, proof of ID, including a photograph and originals of certificates of qualifications. References had been received; one from the last employer and another from the agencies chief executive, both had been verified at the previous inspection.

All the above checks will be carried out for the proposed registered manager once an application has been received.

## Management of the Fostering Service

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 4 (4.1 – 4.5)

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

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

3

Each local office in the Yorks and Lincs region (5) is headed by a team manager who is responsible for the supervision of staff and the delegation of some of the work. The manager via supervision monitors the work of the supervising social workers. Although all the procedures and recording systems are the same throughout the organisation, the team manager monitors the completion of these to ensure consistency. This was confirmed by the supervising social workers spoken to.

Since the last inspection the extent of the work undertaken within each local office had increased. This included the provision of training locally instead of centrally. Additionally the number of carers and supervising social workers had increased.

Staff interviewed said that the business plan stated that the organisation were looking for extra premises. This would mean that 2 of the local offices would be responsible for a “sub office”. The deputy director confirmed that this would be dependent on financial viability.

In light of the above information the NCSC are in negotiation with the agency to establish if the local offices are defined as ‘branches’ and therefore subject to registration.

Staff and carers interviewed confirmed that there were well-established lines of communication and accountability between themselves and the managers.

The inspectors saw evidence on the staff files that they had signed to confirm that they were aware of their responsibility to declare any possible conflicts of interest.

Information was available to purchasers of the service as detailed in standard 4.4.

**Number of statutory notifications made to NCSC 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.**

3

**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.**

1

**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?**

**3**

The manager works full time for FCA and did not hold a similar position in another organisation.

There was a designated assistant manager identified to take responsibility during the manager's absence.

For further information regarding lines of accountability see standard 4.

## 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
<p>The inspectors visited three foster homes as part of the inspection process. These included the homes of foster carers in Hull and Lincoln. Those seen all provided a safe, healthy and nurturing environment that could comfortably accommodate all who lived there. All homes seen were warm, furnished, decorated and maintained to a good standard of cleanliness. Each child had their own room and the environments were free from avoidable hazards. The supervising social workers interviewed said that they carried out an annual health and safety check of the home. Any issues noted were raised with the carer in supervision and recorded.</p> <p>Foster carers interviewed confirmed that their induction, carers handbook and training covered health and safety issues. Those foster carers seen were aware of the NCSC and their role in the inspection process.</p>		

### 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
<p>It was evident from the discussions and interviews conducted by the inspectors that the staff at the agency, both value and implement the companies' detailed policies and procedures relating to diversity and equality.</p> <p>One carer spoken to said that she had consulted with birth families and taken their wishes into account.</p> <p>Staff spoken to said that there were carers from ethnic origins and this was considered when placing children and young people.</p> <p>One staff spoken to gave an example of how a carer had worked to enhance a child's confidence and feeling of self worth. Training on this issue was provided as part of the 'core training package'</p> <p>The information seen confirmed that training was offered to foster carers to enable them to help young people deal with discrimination.</p> <p>The team manager stated that where care was provided for children with disabilities and/ or specific talents, interests and hobbies then a range of facilities and support services would be made available. A therapist was employed by the agency to support and train carers of children with disabilities. One example given was carers who had been trained in Makaton to assist and develop communication. The plan for the last 12 months indicated that training had covered issues relating to caring for children with disabilities.</p>		

<b>Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.7)</b>		
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.		
<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	3
<p>The service had in place a system for both identifying and compensating for any gaps in the match between the child and the carer. The team manager spoken to said that information regarding a child was passed to the placement officer by the child's social worker. This information was then passed to the local office where the needs of the child could be considered along with the needs of the carer and their skills and experience. The placement decision is made by the team manager and supervising social worker.</p> <p>Matching takes account of children's assessed needs in relation to race, religion, language, culture and ethnic origin. Where assessed as necessary, additional support and training is provided to carers. Introductory periods for establishing familiarity and views were used. Not all carers spoken to were aware of the number and status of the children they were approved to care for.</p>		

<b>Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8)</b>		
The fostering service protects each child or young person from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and deprivation.		
<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	3
<p>The inspectors saw copies of the local area child protection procedures in place. Staff interviewed could describe the relationship between those and the services own procedures, giving examples of their content and application. Copies of the services own child protection procedures were seen by the inspectors.</p> <p>There was comprehensive written guidance to staff and carers covering issues of behaviour management, which included sanctions and physical intervention. This guidance was clear about what was permissible and acceptable.</p> <p>Carers confirmed that they had received training around self-caring, managing difficult behaviour and maintaining the child's self esteem.</p> <p>In those files checked there was appropriate and relevant information recorded relating to incidents, allegations and/or complaints. This included both the investigation process and any outcomes. Bullying was addressed through the carer's handbook and during supervision. There were procedures in place to recognise, record and address instances of bullying.</p> <p>Risk assessments were seen which covered the children's known and likely behaviours and activities, illicit or otherwise, both within and outside of the home. These extend to the homes procedures to follow in the event of children being missing from home.</p> <p>X denotes that this information was not requested.</p>		
<b>Percentage of foster children placed who report never or hardly ever being bullied:</b>	X	%

**Standard 10 (10.1 - 10.9)**

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

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

4

FCA had written guidance for staff about promoting contact with family and friends. In each child's individual file contact details were recorded. The children spoken to confirmed that they had been given the opportunity to express their wishes. The agency promoted and facilitated appropriate contact for children regardless of where the child was placed. One carer confirmed that an agency was used to escort young people on contact visits and a report regarding this was written.

Carers confirmed that they had received training and support regarding the requirement for them to encourage and aid contact. Financial support was provided to cover the cost of transport and other expenses incurred. Reports were seen which were designed to feedback information to the child's social worker relating to contact.

It was evident from discussion with carers and young people that contact arrangements were high on the list of priorities. A multi disciplinary approach was used to set up and maintain regular contact with those relatives and friends who were an important part of the young peoples lives.

**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?**

4

The service is commended for their hard work in this area.

All the questionnaires received and young people spoken to said that the fostering service had asked their opinions about their foster carers and how the fostering service could be made better.

The inspectors saw a file titled 'Children's Comments – The Voice of a Child'. This contained feedback from young people regarding holidays, children's forum, parties and social events.

It was evident in discussions with managers and staff of the agency that there was a great amount of enthusiasm shown about the comments received from young people.

The staff, carers and the young people could all detail an extensive range of ways in which consultation had taken place. Particular examples highlighted included a workshop day, with activities specifically designed to encourage young people to air their views, a newsletter and a regular children's forum.

Some of the events organised e.g. an annual holiday and day trips had been opened up to foster carer's birth children. There was evidence from the children's feedback that the agency had complied with the requests they had made e.g. a National Children's Forum.

All of the children spoken to were aware of their right to complain about the service and could detail the procedure for doing so.



**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.**

<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>2</b>
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The service employed a range of professionals whose specific duties included either commissioning or providing local health care services.

The carers interviewed confirmed that although detailed health information was passed to them at the time of placement and verbal updates were given to the placing officer, an ongoing written health care record was not maintained by the carer. Staff spoken to throughout the inspection said that an individual health record, which would stay with each child/young person, was being developed. See previous requirement number 1 carried over from last report.

Carers confirmed that they had received training on health and hygiene issues, first aid and health promotion. Young people spoken to said that they were supported in accessing health care services and were registered with a doctor and dentist as necessary. Specialist health care professionals were members of the services fostering panel. The staff of the agency said their contribution to the process was extremely valuable as it ensured that the health care needs of children, and carers, referred to the panel were fully considered.

**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.**

<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>4</b>
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The education of looked after children was a high priority for Foster Care Associates and the agency were proud of statistics that showed the majority of their children and young people (around 95%) were in full time mainstream or special education provision. There was high precedence in helping foster carers to meet each child's individual needs.

All young people had an educational assessment. Where possible the service aimed to maintain continuity with the educational placement and where new placements had been facilitated Educational Liaison Officer's (ELO) were appointed to ensure that the young people were fully supported as required.

Carers confirmed that they were encouraged to contribute to the assessment of the child's educational needs and provide information relating to attendance and attainment so that help could be provided by the ELO's for exam study and/or home tuition.

Children/young people spoken to, and questionnaires returned confirmed that they were supported with their homework. Any necessary uniform or equipment had been provided. The participation in after school activities or trips had also been supported.

In one file seen by the inspectors the agency had agreed to contribute towards the cost of school activity holidays that had been initially funded by the carers.

Within the foster care homes the inspectors noted a wide range of educational resources and facilities, these included desks and chair for private study, books, games and computer equipment that were age appropriate.

**Standard 14 (14.1 - 14.5)**

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

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

**3**

The service had written guidance for carers covering issues related to preparing young people for adulthood. The standards of practice for foster carers stated that the FCA expected their foster carers to provide young people with opportunities for learning independence skills such as managing money, cooking and domestic responsibilities. Foster carers provided young people with support and guidance including encouragement to get appropriate help from the Connexions Service and other agencies. As the agency was supporting a substantial number of long term/permanent placements they were looking at what service provision could be developed on behalf of the local authorities. A leaving care working party had been established and was meeting regularly.

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

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

### Standard 15 (15.1 - 15.8)

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

#### Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

The service had a policy and procedure relating to the recruitment and selection of staff and foster carers, which the inspectors saw.

The recruitment policy had taken into account all current and relevant legislation.

Staff files were held at the head office personnel department and were made available for the inspectors during the inspection.

The inspectors checked the recruitment files of four members of staff. All contained details of qualifications obtained, experience, employment history, detailed CV's, proof of identity, references, interview record sheet and a copy of the application form.

All social work staff had appropriate qualifications and during staff interviews it was evident that they each had the knowledge and skills to carry out their responsibilities.

Criminal Records Bureau checks (CRB), at enhanced level had been carried out on three members of staff. The fourth staff member was employed prior to April 2002 and had therefore had police checks carried out. These checks had only asked for information relating to the staff member in one name and not in other names previously used.

The manager stated that all other professional staff were appropriately qualified and trained to work with children and unqualified staff do not carry out social work functions.

All staff interviewed were enthusiastic about their work and extremely committed to ensuring that carers were well supported.

The eligibility criteria in relation to CRB checks completed for prospective carers and their families was well known by the carers spoken to and a system was in place to ensure that CRB were renewed every three years.

Total number of staff of the agency:

56

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

6

**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**

There was evidence of a clear management structure within which there were clear lines of accountability and all staff interviewed were aware of these. Staff were supervised (on a monthly basis) and managed by people who had the appropriate skills, experience, qualifications and knowledge base. Staff interviewed said that there were clear systems in place to monitor their workloads and to prioritise particular pieces of work. Additionally they said that managers were always available if they needed to discuss any issues or concerns that they may have.

Within the service staff had access to a range of legal and professional advice.

Staff files seen confirmed that all employees had been provided with written contracts, job descriptions and conditions of service, equal opportunities and health and safety policies and disciplinary and grievance procedures.

Staff had regularly completed relevant training courses. Carers spoken to had maintained a training portfolio. See Standard 19 and 23 for issues relating to training of staff and carers. The service had clear systems in place to ensure that assessments, approvals and reviews were both managed and implemented successfully.

Those staff interviewed confirmed that there were adequate procedures in place to ensure that enquiries for services and employment were dealt with promptly, and that administrative support was sufficient to ensure that the support workers were freed up to concentrate on supporting the needs of the foster carers.

Staff interviewed detailed ways in which they worked in conjunction with the children's social workers and evidence from the children's files showed how supervising social workers 'chased up' social workers when they did not get a response.

One member of staff spoken to said that there were not always enough computers to access e-mails and type reports.

**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**

The staff numbers, experience and qualifications were adequate to meet the service described in the Statement of Purpose. Any staffing deficiency was addressed within the company without resorting to the use of casual staff. The staff spoken to emphasised the quality of FCA's training, supervision and support as reasons for the ongoing recruitment and retention of skilled and diverse staff.

All carers spoken to and information received from questionnaires stated that the carers felt extremely well supported by the agencies staff. If they were unable to speak to their own support worker they had contact numbers for other staff in the company and were encouraged to make contact as and when they needed support, reassurance or advice.

The inspectors found very good standards of care being provided by a committed group of foster parents.

The agency had in place a wide ranging assessment process for carers which included potential foster parents being required to present a portfolio of competencies to the fostering panel. FCA incorporated those matters detailed in Standard 17.7 of the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services within its assessment process.

**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?**

4

The service employed robust practices around the supervision and support of its staff and carers that included out of hours contact.

The inspectors saw evidence of appropriate insurance cover for all staff and carers.

The agency had in place a whistle blowing policy, which staff and carers could describe.

All staff and carers spoken to were very zealous about their role within the agency and it was very evident that the well being of the children and young people within their care was their main concern.

The upper most reason for the foster parents continuing to work with the agency was the feeling of worth and professionalism that was bestowed on them by all members of the staff team that they came into contact with.

**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 inspectors confirmed via the inspection of policies and staff interviews that the service had in place good quality training programmes for all staff, which would ensure that staff were kept up to date with any changes in legislation or guidance.

Supervising social workers training programmes were regularly reviewed and updated according to the needs of individual members of staff and these would be linked into annual appraisals.

All new supervising social workers received detailed and extensive induction training and support.

Joint training forums between staff of the service and carers had been held.

The inspectors were concerned about the rapid expansion of the agency and how the attendance on training could be monitored. The training officer explained an updated system for ensuring that all staff and carers would complete the relevant training.

**Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)**

**All staff are properly accountable and supported.**

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

3

Staff interviewed confirmed to the inspectors that they had regular monthly supervision. The inspectors checked records of supervision and confirmed that these sessions were maintained.

Additionally each staff member had an annual appraisal when performance and training issues would be discussed.

Staff said that they regularly attended team, area and regional meetings.

Staff said that all of these forums supported them to effectively do their job, kept them up to date and enabled them to relay information appropriate to carers as necessary.

**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**

Details of the services policies and procedures for working and supporting carers were in the foster carers handbooks, which also included details of local support groups and contacts. The three supervising social workers interviewed were fully aware of their supervising and supporting responsibilities and all carers spoken to confirmed that regular visits were made to them. The supervising social workers were also committed to ensuring that this role was developed further in the future by looking at alternative forums for support groups and informal training of carers.

The supervising social workers confirmed that they produced annual carer review reports for the fostering panel.

The inspectors were aware from the interviews of the support workers and from the individual files checked that in some cases the supervising social workers did not have regular contact with the child's social worker. It is important to note that in most of these situations the worker had made several attempts to develop positive communication systems with the field social worker.

**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 foster care agreement, provided to each carer, ensured that they were fully aware of the expectations placed upon them by the fostering agency and the placing authority. The agreement covered those matters listed in Schedule 5 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2001.

Carers spoken to confirmed they were given appropriate supervision, which the inspectors noted was provided by a suitably experienced and qualified person.

The carers interviewed confirmed that following their approval they were given a carer's handbook that provided them with information regarding the services policies and procedures, finance, support, complaints, insurance and out of hours management support. Foster carers interviewed confirmed that they met regularly with their supervising social worker and that sometimes these were unannounced visits. All said that they found these sessions supportive and informative.

Respite care was offered to carers on both a planned and necessary basis. Carers spoken to said that the three week respite holiday they received was beneficial to all concerned.

Young people placed also commented about their respite carers and how they themselves enjoyed the 'change' whilst their full time carers took a well-earned break.

Stringent records were kept of information relating to complaints and/or any allegations made against foster carers. There was a clear policy, which outlined the circumstances in which a carer should have their approval terminated.

**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 fostering agencies induction training programme included opportunities for pre-approved carers to meet with existing carers to share experiences and learning.

The service provided evidence of an ongoing programme of training and self-development for foster carers that encompassed the requirements of both Standards 23.3 and 23.7 of the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services. Since the last inspection training has been conducted at local offices. Carers spoken to said out of hours training was arranged for those working full time.

The inspectors noted that following the previous inspection in those households where two adults have been approved as joint carers; both carers had been offered all of the key training.

Review reports seen by the inspector contained details of the carer's annual training and development appraisals.

Not all carers had received training in bullying and non-violent intervention. See requirement number 3.

## Records

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

### Standard 24 (24.1 - 24.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
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The service made positive attempts to ensure that carers received all available and relevant information. The children's case records were well maintained, indexed and information was easily retrievable. There was evidence that information was shared between the supervising social worker and the child's social worker to ensure that there was good integration of information stored in the respective files.

Looked After Children information stored in the individual case files checked contained details of the purpose and intended duration of the placement, together with the child's current legal status.

The inspectors observed two different formats used by carers for the recording of daily events. One format used had 'prompts' to ensure that the carer recorded all relevant information. The other was more 'freestyle' in which the carer chose what to record. The one written in 'freestyle' was neither dated or signed and had not been written on a daily basis. The deputy director said that there was, in some cases, an agreement that the records were not completed daily, for example within a permanent placement, however there was no agreement on file.

Information recorded by carers was seen to be stored in a secure manner.



<b>Standard 25 (25.1 - 25.13)</b>			
<b>The fostering service's administrative records contain all significant information relevant to the running of the foster care service and as required by regulations.</b>			
<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>		<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>3</b>
<p>The service kept separate records for staff, carers, children/young people, complaints and allegations as required by the fostering services standards. Any matters of concern regarding records are clearly documented within the text of this report at the appropriate standard.</p> <p>Systems were in place to ensure that information was recorded, stored or retrieved in a permanent, secure and private manner.</p> <p>Staff interviewed demonstrated that there were ways in which the adequacy of records was monitored and action taken as appropriate.</p> <p>Records were taken with the child/young person should they be moved to another placement.</p> <p>Records of complaints and allegations were kept on relevant files and there was a system in place to bring together this data.</p> <p>The information below was taken from the pre-inspection questionnaire completed by the deputy director.</p>			
<b>Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:</b>			155
<b>Number of placements made by the agency in the last 12 months:</b>			100
<b>Number of placements made by the agency which ended in the past 12 months:</b>			28
<b>Number of new foster carers approved during the last 12 months:</b>			52
<b>Number of foster carers who left the agency during the last 12 months:</b>			5
<b>Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £</b>		343	<b>Maximum £</b> 686

## Fitness of Premises for use as Fostering Service

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

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

Standard 26 (26.1 - 26.5)

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

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

3

The inspectors visited three office premises. All were appropriately sized, well furnished and clean. The inspectors found a friendly and welcoming atmosphere in all offices visited. Office premises were accessible to staff, carers, children and young people during normal office hours. Within the offices there were rooms that were used for meetings, training and therapeutic work. Walls displayed useful information and a delightful display of artwork by children and young people cared for by the agency.

Four supervising social workers interviewed confirmed that a competent and supportive administration team was in place within the service and that in the main, the office was sufficiently equipped with the necessary items.

The IT systems and security systems within the offices ensured that records were stored securely.

Keypads on doors ensured that access was restricted to authorised personnel.

The deputy director confirmed that the premises were insured and that systems were in place for replacing items when required.

## 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 deputy director confirmed in the pre inspection information that the agency was financially viable and had sufficient financial resources to fulfil its obligations. She also stated that they had sound financial procedures and the directors regularly reviewed budgets.

As part of the registration process, information regarding the financial viability of the company had been received by the NCSC in the form of a business and spending plan. These were examined by the inspectors and found to be in order.

### 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 fostering agency publishes its charges for their services in the prospectus.

The information seen by the inspectors clearly detailed the charges for a range of placements and any additional services they provided.

The prospectus also clearly showed where all the money received by the agency goes.

The pre-inspection information provided, showed that there were systems for ensuring that the agencies accounts were properly maintained and audited by a registered accountant.

**Standard 29 (29.1 - 29.2)**

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

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

3

The agency had a written policy on fostering allowances. Current allowances were well published within the prospectus and carers received clear information about allowances. The inspectors interviewed five foster carers; all said that they felt that the allowance provided to them from the agency covered the cost of caring for each child and/or young person placed with them.  
All carers said that payments were made promptly and at the agreed time.  
Allowances and fees were reviewed annually.

## Fostering Panels

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

### Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.9)

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

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

3

It was not possible for the inspectors to observe the fostering panel, as part of the inspection process. The following information was confirmed by staff interviews, information from pre inspection questionnaire and prior knowledge of the fostering panel from the previous inspection.

The agency had written operational procedures relating to the panel. The procedure detailed legislative and regulatory framework, membership of the panel, the functions and conduct of the panel, decision-making and representations. The procedure for decision-making, when all members of the panel were not in agreement was incorporated in the procedure.

The registered manager stated that all members of the panel were required to complete all recruitment checks, including CRB before they were allowed to commence work. Members of the panel included a medical advisor and independent members who had expertise in child health and education. One independent member of the panel had been in the care of foster parents during her childhood, other members were approved foster carers for the local authority.

Information relating to each case brought to the panel was distributed to each member prior to the meeting to enable them to absorb and highlight any issues for further discussion.

## 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?	9
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This standard is not applicable to the agency.

## 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?	9
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This standard is not applicable to the agency.

**PART C**

**LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY**

**(where applicable)**

N/A

**Lay Assessor**          N/A          **Signature**      \_\_\_\_\_

**Date**          N/A



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

We would welcome comments on the content of this report relating to the Inspection conducted on 28/29/30th January 2004 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

**Standard 1**

The FCA Statement of Purpose is currently being updated nationally. Locally in Yorks and Lincs, staff will be asked to prepare information about their teams and local services for insertion to this document.

The Children's Guide is being reviewed through consultation at the local and national Children's Forums. The new FCA complaints poster was designed by children at the National Children's Forum.

It is an inaccuracy to say that the Placement Manager reviews the guide. The placement team ensures every child receives the Children's File of Facts.

**Standard 2**

This inspection was notified to FCA Yorks and Lincs in December 2003 when the current registered manager was still in post. It was openly shared with the inspectors that a change of manager was being proposed with the new director, taking up her post on January 1<sup>st</sup> and applying to register soon after.

The Registered Manager was not detached from the agency in the intervening 28 days. She was available at all times to the staff and carers and was kept informed about all incidents occurring with children in placement.

**Standard 23**

FCA does monitor the training both it's staff and carers undertake. A comprehensive training database is maintained which records attendance at training events. Certificates are given and training attended are logged at the carer review. Evidence was seen by the inspectors that a carer who was unable to attend a training course was contacted immediately and given an alternative date.

All carers are expected to complete their training selections in December of each year and this is checked by the Training Officer.

The Reviewing Officer details carer's additional training needs and passed to the training officer.

Staff training and development needs are monitored through supervision and annual appraisal.

Virtually all FCA staff have not only attended internal training events but have had the opportunity to attend external events.

Finally the HR section offers specific training for first line managers and on Health & Safety matters for all staff.

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

Amendments to the report were necessary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments were received from the provider	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provider comments/factual amendments were incorporated into the final inspection report	<input type="checkbox"/>
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"/>

**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 within 28 days which indicates how statutory requirements and recommendations are to be addressed within the timescales 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 – Announced Inspection 28<sup>th</sup> January 2004**

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

**D.3.1 I Mr Martin J. Cockburn of Foster Care Associates confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above dates 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 Mr Martin J. Cockburn of Foster Care Associates 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.