



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

Fostering Services

Five Rivers Fostering

South Park Business Centre

306A Green Lane

Ilford

Essex

IG1 1LQ

18th October to 1st November 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

Five Rivers Fostering

Tel No

020 8599 5251

Address

South Park Business Centre, 306A Green Lane, Ilford,
Essex, IG1 1LQ

Fax No

Email Address

Registered Number of IFA

G050000386

Name of Registered Provider

Five Rivers Family Placement Limited

Name of Registered Manager (if applicable)

Mrs Usha Jobanputra

Date of first registration

19th August 2003

Date of latest registration certificate

19th August 2003

Registration Conditions Apply ?

NO

Date of last inspection

09/02/04

Date of Inspection Visit		18 th October to 1st November 2004	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		09:30 am	
Name of Inspector	1	Debbie Kittridge	118733
Name of Inspector	2	NA	
Name of Inspector	3	NA	
Name of Inspector	4	NA	
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.		NA	
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)		NA	
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection		Usha Jobanputra.	

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 Five Rivers Fostering. 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.

Five Rivers Fostering Service is a private fostering agency that has been operational since September 2001. Five Rivers Fostering Service is located within the London Borough of Redbridge. The registered provider, Five Rivers Family Placement Limited, is a national organisation and the head office is situated in Wiltshire.

There are a total of six branches of the foster service throughout the country. Fostering services include short and long term fostering for children and young people aged between 0-18 years. The service aims to meet the identified needs of children placed and to fully support carers within that task.

The manager and staff work in partnership with children and their families and every endeavour is made to link children with foster carers who reflect their cultural and racial backgrounds.

PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

Inspector's Summary

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

The inspection took place over a period of six weeks from 18th October - 1st November 2004.

The inspector attended the London (Essex) office of the fostering service during the course of the inspection and was assisted by the registered manager. The inspector was pleased to note that a number of improvements have occurred in the quality of service being delivered by the fostering service following the registered manager's return to work. This is reflected by the significant reduction in the number of requirements made from the previous inspection.

The inspector attended a foster carer training day and foster carer support group meeting as part of the inspection process. Both sessions were well supported by foster carers and feedback was found to be positive. The inspector also visited the homes of three foster carers and met and spoke with three foster children. Information gathered during the course of these visits indicated that young people felt happy and well cared for in their placements. The inspector also received written feedback information from five foster children indicating that they were also satisfied with their placements.

From discussions with foster carers it became clear that they are allocated a named link worker/support worker. However, it was not clear that face-to-face contact is maintained in line with the fostering service statement of purpose. A previous requirement was made in this respect. The requirement has been carried forward in this report. Unmet requirements impact on the welfare and safety of service users. Therefore continued failure to meet repeated requirements will lead to the Commission for Social Care Inspection considering enforcement action against the registered person(s) in order to secure compliance.

The inspector did not attend the fostering panel for Five Rivers Fostering Service. This element of the inspection was undertaken by the Wiltshire Area Office of the CSCI. Information regarding the fostering panel is included in the report for the Salisbury office of the Five Rivers Fostering Service.

Statement of Purpose (Standard 1)

This standard was tested and judged to have been fully met.

A comprehensive Statement of Purpose has been developed by the Fostering Service.

A Statement of Purpose for the London (Essex) office has also been developed incorporating all relevant information about specific services provided by them.

A Children's Guide has been developed in formats suitable to meet needs of young people.

Fitness to Carry On or Manage a Fostering Service (Standards 2-3)

Both standards were tested and judged to be fully met.

The registered manager is appropriately qualified and competent to manage the service.

From inspection of staff files the inspector was satisfied that the requirements of Schedule 1 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002 were met in all cases, in relation to documentation concerning the fitness and competence of staff.

Management of the Fostering Service (Standards 4-5) Standards 2-3)

Both standards were tested and judged to be fully met.

The inspector was satisfied that lines of communication between carers and the agency are well established. Financial procedures are also made clear to foster carers in writing. A

recommendation has been made that the registered persons provide all foster carers with clear, up to date information regarding payments, fees etc. The inspector was satisfied that the role and responsibilities of the registered manager are clearly defined. A clear procedure has been developed and implemented by the organisation detailing interim managements arrangements in the event that the manager is absent from duty.

Securing and Promoting Welfare (Standards 6-14)

Nine standards were tested. Five standards were judged to be fully met. Two standards were mostly met; two standards were not met.

Evidence was seen that Five Rivers Fostering Service has recognised the needs of the varied and diverse community in the London area. The London (Essex) office have successfully recruited foster carers from a range of ethnic backgrounds.

Children/young people are encouraged and supported to maintain links with parents/relatives and friends in accordance with placement plans. The fostering service ensures that young people's views are sought.

Children/young people are supported to engage in education activities. Systems of documentation have been implemented ensuring that information such as Personal Education Plans, Statements of Special Education Needs and school reports are incorporated into young people's files.

A leaving care programme has been developed for use by foster carers providing care to young people approaching adulthood.

Evidence was seen that a fostering service handbook, covering all items identified in standard 22.5 of The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services 2002 has been developed. However, it not possible to determine that all foster carers had received a copy of the updated handbook. A requirement has been made to this effect.

Care is taken when matching children with carers prior to the commencement of planned placements. However, it was not clear that the fostering service acted appropriately by allowing an emergency placement to continue where the ethnic origin of the foster carer and child were not appropriately matched. A requirement has been made that placement decisions must consider the child's assessed needs, racial, ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic needs.

Evidence was seen that a training programme has been developed for prospective foster carers incorporating child protection awareness training. At the time of the inspection it was not possible to determine that the fostering service maintained appropriate levels of supervision ensuring that young people were safeguarded from abuse at all times. A requirement has been made that the registered must develop and implement robust child protection monitoring systems ensuring that children/young people are appropriately safeguarded at all times.

Appropriate systems have been developed and implemented ensuring that relevant health information is included in young people's files. However, the inspector found that the fostering service failed to provide adequate information to a foster carer regarding the medical requirements of a child placed in an emergency. There is an outstanding requirement from the previous two reports that the fostering service must provide foster carers with a full description of young people's health care needs before the placement begins or as soon as possible afterwards. The requirement has been carried forward in this report. Failure to comply will lead to enforcement action being considered, to secure compliance.

Recruiting, Checking, Managing, Supporting and Training Staff and Foster Carers (Standards 15-23)

Nine standards were tested. Seven standards were judged to be fully met; one was mostly met and one was not met.

Prospective foster carers participate in an appropriate residential training programme. Evidence was seen that foster carers are appropriately recruited and supported to participate in a programme of ongoing training and development. The fostering service has strategies in place for working with and supporting foster carers.

The fostering service provides an adequate number of sufficiently experienced and qualified staff. From examination of relevant documentation the inspector was satisfied all staff are properly accountable and are supported.

The inspector found that it was not possible to determine that the frequency of face-to-face supervision with foster carers was in line with the fostering service statement of purpose. A previous requirement was made that the registered person must develop and implement robust monitoring systems ensuring that the frequency of supervision provided is in line with the Statement of Purpose. The requirement has been carried forward in this report with new timescales set for compliance.

Records (Standards 24-25)

Both standards were tested and judged to be fully met.

The inspector was satisfied that comprehensive case records were maintained for each child/ young person in foster care. Records contained all information required by Regulations. Confidential records were held securely. A clear policy was available describing the procedure for accessing records.

A record of complaints was held by the fostering service.

Fitness of Premises for use as a Fostering Service (Standard 26)

This standard was tested and judged to be fully met.

The inspector was satisfied that the fostering service premises were fit for the purpose.

Financial Requirements (Standards 27-29)

One standard was tested and judged to be fully met. Two standards were not tested; the key findings in relation to these standards are included in the report for the Salisbury/head office of the Five Rivers Fostering Service.

The inspector was satisfied that foster carers receive fees in line with the Pan London Agreement.

Fostering Panels (Standard 30)

This standard was not tested.

The key findings in relation to this standard are included in the report for the Salisbury office of the Five Rivers Fostering Service.

Short-Term Breaks (Standard 31)

This standard does not apply to the fostering service.

Family and Friends as Carers (Standard 32)

This standard does not apply to the fostering service.

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:

Not Applicable

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	
			<p>Where the previous requirement was not met, or it was not possible to evidence compliance, a new target date has been set. The number in the column headed "No." refers to the requirement number in the last inspection report. In the "Timescale for action" column, the new date in bold print refers to the new timescale set. Further information about unmet requirements can be found in the relevant standard in the body of the report.</p> <p>Unmet requirements impact on the welfare and safety of service users. Therefore continued failure to meet repeated requirements will lead to the Commission for Social Care Inspection considering enforcement action against the registered person(s) to secure compliance.</p>	
3	15,17	FS12	The manager must ensure that before a placement begins, or as soon as possible afterwards, that the foster carer is provided with a full description of the health needs of young people.	Immediate & ongoing. 30/06/04 31/01/05
9	35	FS16	The registered person must develop and implement robust monitoring systems ensuring that the frequency of supervision provided to foster carers is maintained in line with the Statement of Purpose.	31/05/04 01/02/05

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

COMPLIANCE WITH CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION (IF APPLICABLE)

(Registered Independent Fostering Agencies only)

Providers and managers of registered independent fostering agencies must comply with statutory conditions of their registration. The conditions applying to this registration are listed below, with the inspector's assessment of compliance from the evidence at the time of this inspection.

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Lead Inspector **Debbie Kittridge** **Signature** _____
Second Inspector _____ **Signature** _____
Locality Manager _____ **Signature** _____
Date _____

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS IDENTIFIED DURING THIS INSPECTION

Action Plan: The appropriate Officer of the Local Authority or the Registered Person (as applicable) is requested to provide the Commission with an Action Plan, which indicates how requirements 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	17	FS6	The registered persons are required to ensure that a copy of the updated foster carer handbook, covering all items identified in standard 22.5 of The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services 2002, is provided to all foster carers.	01/02/05
2	11	FS8	The registered persons must ensure that all placements are appropriately matched. Placement decisions must consider the child's assessed needs, racial, ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic needs. Emergency placements must be reviewed appropriately and action taken to identify alternative placements where matching is not consistent with the child's ethnic origin.	28/02/05
3	11, 12	FS9FS16 FS22	The registered persons are required to develop and implement robust child protection monitoring systems ensuring that children/young people are appropriately safeguarded at all times.	01/02/05

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THIS INSPECTION

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

No.	Refer to Standard *	Recommendation Action
1	FS4	It is recommended that the registered persons provide all foster carers with clear, up to date information regarding payments, fees etc.

* 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	5
Survey of placing authorities	YES
Foster carer survey	YES
Foster children survey	YES
Checks with other organisations and Individuals	NO
• Directors of Social services	NO
• Child protection officer	NO
• Specialist advisor (s)	NO
• Local Foster Care Association	NO
Tracking Individual welfare arrangements	YES
• Interview with children	YES
• Interview with foster carers	YES
• Interview with agency staff	YES
• Contact with parents	YES
• Contact with supervising social workers	NO
• Examination of files	YES
Individual interview with manager	YES
Information from provider	YES
Individual interviews with key staff	YES
Group discussion with staff	YES
Interview with panel chair	NO
Observation of foster carer training	YES
Observation of foster panel	NO
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Interview with individual child	YES

Date of Inspection 18/10/04

Five Rivers Fostering

Time of Inspection
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)

09.30
40

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

The scale ranges from:

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

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

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

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

Statement of Purpose

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

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

Standard 1 (1.1 - 1.6)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The organisation has developed a clear Statement of Purpose outlining the aims and objectives for the service. The Statement of Purpose has been developed to include all information required by Regulations.

A Statement of Purpose, specific to the service provided by the London (Essex) office has also been produced. The aim of this document is to provide information regarding the London office, including staffing structure and the number of carers, placements etc. The inspector was satisfied that the document has been recently updated to include all relevant information regarding services provided by the London office.

The Children's Guide has been developed in two formats, providing information to children of eight years and under and children over eight. The guides are available in different formats to meet the needs of children of all age groups. From discussions with the registered manager the inspector found that the children's guide would be made available in different languages should this be required.

Fitness to Carry On or Manage a Fostering Service

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 2 (2.1 - 2.4)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The manager has a professional and management qualification relevant to working with children and in accordance with requirements of the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services.

Staff spoken to reported that they have a good working relationship with the manager. Evidence was seen that team meetings take place on a regular basis and provide an opportunity for staff to discuss any issues that may arise.

From examination of relevant documentation the inspector was satisfied that robust policies and procedures have been developed and implemented by the organisation detailing action to be taken in the event that the registered manager is absent from the agency for more than 28 days.

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

From inspection of staff files the inspector was satisfied that the requirements of Schedule 1 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002 were met in all cases, e.g. proof of identity, references, qualifications and employment history. Evidence was seen that CRB checks were in place for all members of staff. The registered manager stated that monitoring systems are in place to ensure that all CRB checks were maintained up to date in line with current Regulations.

Management of the Fostering Service

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 4 (4.1 – 4.5)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

A copy of the financial contract was seen. Evidence was seen that information is provided to purchasers of services e.g. regarding the fees.

From discussions with staff and foster carers, the inspector was satisfied that lines of communication between carers and the agency are well established. Financial procedures are also made clear to foster carers in writing. This is reinforced by financial contracts both to purchasers and foster carers. However, from discussions with foster carers the inspector found that information regarding payments remained unclear. The inspector found that it was not possible to determine that in all cases carers had received accurate, up to date information from the agency regarding financial arrangements. It is therefore recommended that the registered persons provide all foster carers with clear, up to date information regarding payments, fees etc.

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

2

Death of a child placed with foster parents.

0

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

0

Serious illness or accident of a child.

0

Outbreak of serious infectious disease at a foster home.

0

Actual or suspected involvement of a child in prostitution.

0

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

1

Serious complaint about a foster parent.

0

Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.

2

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

0

Number of the above complaints which were substantiated:

0

Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.4)**The fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently.****Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****3**

From examination of documentation and discussion with the registered manager, the inspector was satisfied that the role and responsibilities of the registered manager are clearly defined. Evidence was seen that changes in staffing within the London (Essex) office have facilitated the transfer of the registered manager's caseload to a newly appointed link worker. The registered manager stated that the changes have enabled her to concentrate on her management role within the office. However, the registered manager will continue to provide cover as required.

From examination of relevant documentation the inspector was satisfied that a clear procedure has been developed and implemented by the organisation detailing interim managements arrangements in the event that the manager is absent from duty.

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?	2
<p>The inspector visited the homes of three foster carers as part of the inspection process. The homes were found to be warm, adequately furnished, decorated and maintained to a good standard of cleanliness. Within the homes all children were found to have their own bedroom, except where accommodation was being provided to a child under the age of three years of age.</p> <p>Evidence was seen that all foster carers had participated in preparation training and had received guidance and training in relation to their health and safety responsibilities. The inspector saw that foster homes are inspected annually and a health and safety check is completed.</p> <p>From discussions with foster carers the inspector found that it was not possible to determine that all foster carers had received a copy of the updated foster carer handbook. Carers spoken to expressed concern that they did not have access accurate, up-to-date information regarding the policies, procedure, guidance, legal information and insurance details of the fostering service.</p> <p>In order to meet this standard in full the registered persons are required to ensure that a copy of the updated foster carer handbook, covering all items identified in standard 22.5 of The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services 2002, is provided to all foster carers.</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>The inspector attended a foster carer training session addressing issues relating to anti-discriminatory practice. Evidence was seen that foster carers also receive training relating to discrimination and valuing diversity as part of initial preparation training.</p> <p>Evidence was seen that Five Rivers Fostering Service has recognised the needs of the varied and diverse community in the London area. Information was seen confirming that the London office have successfully recruited foster carers from a range of ethnic backgrounds.</p>		

Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.7)		
Local authority fostering services, and voluntary agencies placing children in their own right, ensure that each child or young person placed in foster care is carefully matched with a carer capable of meeting her/his assessed needs. For agencies providing foster carers to local authorities, those agencies ensure that they offer carers only if they represent appropriate matches for a child for whom a local authority is seeking a carer.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
<p>From observation of documentation and discussion with foster carers, the inspector found that care is taken when matching children with carers prior to the commencement of planned placements. Where placements are made in an emergency attempts are made to match children/young people appropriately wherever possible.</p> <p>Evidence was seen that one placement had been made in an emergency that did not reflect the child's ethnic origin. Following discussions with the foster carer and registered manager, the inspector found that it was not possible to determine that an appropriate, alternative placement had been sought within six weeks of the placement being made, in accordance with NMS 7.2. Although the inspector was satisfied that the placement did not pose a risk to the foster child and reviews were taking place, it was not clear that the fostering service had acted appropriately by allowing the placement to continue.</p> <p>In order to meet this standard in full the registered persons must ensure that all placements are appropriately matched. Placement decisions must consider the child's assessed needs, racial, ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic needs. Emergency placements must be reviewed appropriately and action taken to identify alternative placements where matching is not consistent with the child's ethnic origin.</p>		

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?	1
<p>Documented evidence was seen that a training programme has been developed for prospective foster carers incorporating child protection awareness training.</p> <p>From discussion with foster carers the inspector found that carers are provided with information relating to anti-bullying, corporal punishment and 'missing from care' policies. At the time of the inspection the fostering service were in the process of de-registering a foster carer following a child protection investigation. Through case tracking the inspector found that the foster carer had experienced personal difficulties affecting her ability to provide consistent, safe care. The inspector found that although attempts had been made by the fostering service link worker to maintain regular face-to-face contact with the foster carer, this had been unsuccessful. As a result the link worker was not fully aware of difficulties affecting the continued safety of the placement.</p> <p>From examination of relevant documentation the inspector found that it was not possible to determine that the fostering service maintained appropriate levels of supervision ensuring that young people were safeguarded from abuse. It is therefore a requirement of this report that the registered persons must develop and implement robust monitoring systems to ensure that children/young people are appropriately safeguarded at all times. See also standard 16 and corresponding requirement.</p>		
Percentage of foster children placed who report never or hardly ever being bullied:	X	%

Standard 10 (10.1 - 10.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The inspector received five feedback forms from children placed by the fostering service. Feedback information indicated that in all cases the children were happy with their placement.

From discussion with foster carers and young people the inspector found that children are encouraged and supported to maintain links with parents/relatives and friends in accordance with placement plans.

The fostering service ensures that foster carers maintain a daily record of children's mood and behaviour, particularly in response to contact arrangements; this information is fed back to the child's social worker.

Standard 11 (11.1 - 11.5)

The fostering service ensures that children's opinions, and those of their families and others significant to the child, are sought over all issues that are likely to affect their daily life and their future.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

From discussions with foster carers, young people and additional written feedback information provided by young people, the inspector was satisfied that the fostering service ensures that young people's views are sought. Foster carers ensure that young people's opinions are fed back to the placing social worker.

From observation of documentation the inspector was satisfied that an appropriate complaints procedure has been developed for use by young people. Young people spoken to demonstrated awareness of the complaints procedure and indicated that they knew who to speak to if they wished to make a complaint.

Standard 12 (12.1 - 12.8)

The fostering service ensures that it provides foster care services which help each child or young person in foster care to receive health care which meets her/his needs for physical, emotional and social development, together with information and training appropriate to her/his age and understanding to enable informed participation in decisions about her/his health needs.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

1

From observation of documentation and discussions with the registered manager, the inspector was satisfied that appropriate systems have been developed and implemented ensuring that relevant health information is included in young people's files.

From discussions with foster carers the inspector found that support is provided enabling young people to access appropriate health care services.

However, from discussions with one foster carer the inspector found that the fostering service failed to provide adequate information concerning the medical requirements of a child placed in an emergency. The inspector found that although some information was provided to the foster carer, this did not include details of ongoing treatments required. The inspector also found that it was not possible to determine that appropriate information had been provided to the carer enabling her to deliver appropriate, informed care.

Whilst the inspector accepts that information regarding young people's health requirements would normally be provided by the placing authority, it remains of concern that the fostering

service failed to provide ongoing support and information to the foster carer enabling her to deliver informed care.

There is an outstanding requirement from the previous two reports that the fostering service must provide foster carers with a full description of young people's health care needs before the placement begins or as soon as possible afterwards. The requirement remains unmet and has been carried forward in this report with new timescales set for compliance.

Requirements that remain unmet pose a risk to young people's well being and will result in the Commission considering enforcement action to secure compliance.

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

From discussions with foster carers the inspector found that young people are supported to engage in education activities. Foster carers attended parents' evenings and maintain links with schools, including participating in educational reviews.

From observation of documentation the inspector was satisfied that new systems of documentation have been implemented ensuring that information such as Personal Education Plans, Statements of Special Education Needs and school reports are incorporated into young people's files. Contact information was also included i.e. name of the class teacher and head teacher.

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

At the time of the inspection the oldest child placed by the fostering service was 15 years old. The inspector did not meet with this young person and it was there for not possible to test this standard directly.

However, from discussion with foster carers and examination of the fostering service's documentation the inspector was satisfied that a leaving care programme has been developed for use by foster carers providing care to young people approaching adulthood. The inspector was satisfied that the care programme covers a comprehensive range of daily living skills necessary 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

From observation of personnel files and discussions with staff the inspector was satisfied that people working for, or in the fostering service were suitable to work with children and young people. Evidence was seen that foster carers were appropriately recruited and all checks required by regulations were in place.

Total number of staff of the agency:

5

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

1

Standard 16 (16.1 - 16.16)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

1

See standard 9 and corresponding requirement.

From discussions with staff and the registered manager, the inspector found that sufficient numbers of staff were employed by the fostering service at the time of the inspection. The registered manager stated that staffing levels are determined according to maximum caseload levels set by the fostering service.

Arrangements for supervision of foster carers, as described in The Statement of Purpose indicates, "The frequency of supervision is never less than 3 weeks.... For the first two months of any placement, however experienced the carer, supervision shall be weekly. From discussions with foster carers and examination of documentation held by them, the inspector found that it was not possible to determine that the frequency of face-to-face supervision, provided by link workers, was in line with the fostering service statement of purpose. Reasons for this remain unclear. Foster carers spoken to, however, did provide confirmation that where home visits had not taken place telephone contact had been maintained by the fostering service.

A previous requirement was made that the registered person must develop and implement robust monitoring systems ensuring that the frequency of supervision provided to foster carers is in line with the Statement of Purpose. At the time of this inspection evidence was

seen that the registered manager had taken action to improve/increase monitoring systems in response to the previous requirement. However, it was not possible to determine the effectiveness of increased monitoring at this time. The requirement has therefore been carried forward in this report with new timescales set for compliance. This situation will continue to be monitored by the Commission as part of ongoing inspection processes.

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

See standard 16.

At the time of the inspection the fostering service provided an adequate number of sufficiently experienced and qualified staff. This was found to be in line with the Statement of Purpose.

The number of approved foster carers and fostering service staff has increased in direct response to an additional local authority placement contract being secured by the London office.

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

From discussions with foster carers the inspector was satisfied that “out of hours” contact arrangements were known to them.

The inspector saw evidence of a valid certificate of insurance for the fostering service.

The inspector examined documentation describing management systems and arrangements for supervision and appraisal. The inspector was satisfied that staff disciplinary procedures had been updated in response to a previous requirement. Evidence was seen that information has been updated to include specific management arrangements in the event of a manager being suspended from duties.

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
<p>Evidence was seen that fostering service staff participate in an appropriate induction programme. From discussions with foster carers and examination of documentation the inspector was satisfied that all prospective carers participate in an appropriate residential training programme.</p> <p>From discussion with the registered manager and foster carers, the inspector was satisfied that support and funding is provided enabling carers to access relevant training courses i.e. NVQ training.</p> <p>Evidence was seen that a programme of ongoing training and development for foster carers was in place. The inspector attended a foster carer training session as part of the inspection process. The session was well attended and feedback from carers was found to be extremely positive.</p> <p>The inspector also attended a foster carer support group, currently facilitated by the fostering service on a monthly basis. From discussion with carers the inspector found that support for the group amongst carer's continues to grow. Evidence was seen that carers had expressed an interest in self-managing the group with minimal support provided by the fostering service in the future.</p>		

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)		
All staff are properly accountable and supported.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>From discussion with staff and observation of documentation the inspector was satisfied that staff who come into contact with foster carers, prospective foster carers and children/young people receive regular supervision. Responsibility for providing supervision is delegated to the manager and a senior member of the staff team.</p> <p>Evidence was seen that supervision is planned in advance and recorded appropriately.</p>		

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**

From discussion with staff and observation of documentation the inspector was satisfied that the fostering service has strategies in place for working with and supporting foster carers. From discussions with foster carers the inspector found that payments were received on time. (See standard 4 and corresponding recommendation). Comments received indicated that the quality of service provided by the fostering service was good.

Evidence was seen that the fostering service operates an effective out of hours support service, which is known to foster carers.

Only one feedback questionnaire was received from placing social workers in response to information requested by the Commission. Feedback information related to the young person most recently placed by the fostering service. Comments received from the placing officer indicated that the quality of service provided by the fostering service was of a good standard.

Standard 22 (22.1 - 22.10)**The fostering service is a managed one that provides supervision for foster carers and helps them to develop their skills.****Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****2**

Foster carers are provided with a copy of the fostering service agreement in line with Schedule 5 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2001. Evidence was seen that a fostering service handbook, covering all items identified in standard 22.5 of The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services 2002 has also been developed and updated. See standard 6 and corresponding requirement.

From discussions with foster carers, the inspector was satisfied that all carers were allocated a named link social worker or support worker. The statement of purpose provides details of supervision arrangements and the expected frequency of visits by the link social worker. However, it was not possible to determine that visits were occurring in line with the statement of purpose. See standard 16 and corresponding requirement.

Evidence was seen that allegations of abuse are appropriately recorded and notified to the Commission. Appropriate action is taken to remove foster carers from the register where necessary. See standard 9 and corresponding requirement.

Standard 23 (23.1 - 23.9)**The fostering service ensures that foster carers are trained in the skills required to provide high quality care and meet the needs of each child/young person placed in their care.****Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****3**

Documented evidence was seen confirming that a comprehensive residential training programme for prospective foster carers was in place. From discussions with foster carers and staff, the inspector was satisfied that all prospective foster carers are required to attend the residential training weekend.

Evidence was seen that action has been taken to develop an ongoing programme of training and self-development for foster carers in response to a previous requirement.

Records

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 24 (24.1 - 24.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The inspector examined a sample of case records. Records were found to be up to date and included all relevant statutory information.

The inspector saw evidence that recording systems for children's case records had been improved. Records were found to include life story work and improved medical and educational information.

From discussions with foster carers the inspector was satisfied that carers understood the need to encourage children/young people to reflect on his/her history and keep appropriate memorabilia.

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

From inspection of case records for foster carers and children/young people the inspector was satisfied that records contained all information required by Regulations. Confidential records were held securely. A clear policy was available describing the procedure for accessing records.

A record of complaints was maintained by the manager. Evidence was seen that no complaints were recorded since the last inspection.

Statistical information included in this standard was provided by the fostering service.

Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:

20

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

12

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

9

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

10

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

0

Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £

370

Maximum £

1120

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

From observation of the fostering service premises and viewing the insurance certificate, the inspector was satisfied that the premises are suitable for the purpose.

This standard was met.

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

The inspector did not test this standard.

Five Rivers Fostering Service is a national organisation and inspectors from the Wiltshire area office of the CSCI tested this standard on behalf of the Commission for Social Care Inspection. The inspectors found that this standard was not fully met.

The key findings in relation to this standard are included in the report for the Salisbury office of the Five Rivers Fostering Service.

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

The inspector did not test this standard for the London (Essex) branch of the Five Rivers Fostering Service.

Inspectors from the Wiltshire area office of the CSCI tested this standard on behalf of the Commission for Social Care Inspection. The inspectors found that this standard was not met. The key findings in relation to this standard are included in the report for the Salisbury office of the Five Rivers Fostering Service.

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

From discussions with foster carers, the manager and observation of documentation the inspector was satisfied that foster carers receive fees in line with the Pan London agreement. The inspector was advised that fees are reviewed annually. The inspector was satisfied that this standard is met.

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?

0

The inspector did not attend the fostering panel as part of this inspection. Five Rivers Fostering Service currently holds one fostering panel for all of its branches. Inspectors for the Wiltshire Area Office of the CSCI undertook observation of the fostering panel on behalf of the Commission for Social Care Inspection. The inspectors found that this standard was not fully met. The key findings in relation to this standard are included in the report for the Salisbury office of the Five Rivers Fostering Service.

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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Five Rivers Fostering Service does not provide short-term placements within the meaning of Regulation 37 of the Fostering Service Regulations 2002.

Family and Friends as Carers

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.4)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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This standard does not apply to Five Rivers Fostering Service.	
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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 <enter date(s) of inspection here> and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

23/12/04.

Provider's comments and action plan were received.

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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