

# inspection report

## Fostering Services

### **Fostering Services (RBKC)**

Social Services Department

Westway, 140 Ladbroke Grove

North Kensington

London

W10 5UD

14th February 2005

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

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

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

### **The role of CSCI is to:**

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

## **Inspection Methods & Findings**

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

### **The 4-point scale ranges from:**

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

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

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

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

## FOSTERING SERVICE INFORMATION

**Local Authority Fostering Service?**

YES

**Name of Authority**

Fostering Services (RBKC)

**Address**

Social Services Department, Westway, 140 Ladbroke Grove, North Kensington, London, W10 5UD

**Local Authority Manager**

Mr Martin Fry

**Tel No:**

020 7937 5464

**Address**

Social Services Department, Westway, 140 Ladbroke Grove, North Kensington, London, W10 5UD

**Fax No:**

**Email Address**

jean.daintith@rbkc.gov.uk

**Registered Fostering Agency (IFA)**

NO

**Name of Agency**

**Tel No**

**Address**

**Fax No**

**Email Address**

**Registered Number of IFA**

**Name of Registered Provider**

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

**Date of first registration**

**Date of latest registration certificate**

**Registration Conditions Apply ?**

NO

**Date of last inspection**

19/01/04

<b>Date of Inspection Visit</b>		14th February 2005	<b>ID Code</b>
<b>Time of Inspection Visit</b>		10:30 am	
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>1</b>	Peter Montgomery	077374
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>2</b>		
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>3</b>		
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>4</b>		
<b>Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable)</b> 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.			
<b>Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)</b>			
<b>Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection</b>			

**Introduction to Report and Inspection**

**Inspection visits**

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**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**

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**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**
- 11. Family and friend carers**

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**D.1. Provider's comments**

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## 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 Fostering Services (RBKC). 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.

<b>BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED.</b>
<p>The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Fostering Team is based in the Social Services area offices in Ladbroke Grove, with an office on the first floor. At the time of the inspection there were 96 foster carers supported by the service, providing placements for 118 children and young people. The team comprises of the Team Manager, a Senior Practitioner, 12 Social Workers, 1 Recruitment Officer, 1 Placements officer, and 2 Business Support staff. The building is shared with a number of other social work teams and a Citizens' Advice Bureau office. Disabled access is available throughout the building.</p>

## 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.)

This inspection took place over four days in February 2005. The Inspector spent time meeting with four foster carers and the young people placed with them. Time was also spent speaking with staff in the Fostering Service and reviewing foster carers' records. The Inspector also attended the Fostering Panel on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2005 and interviewed the Panel Chair. Six foster carers and one young person returned confidential questionnaires. No Requirements were made at the last annual inspection.

### **Statement of purpose**

#### **This Standard was met.**

The service's Statement of Purpose accurately describes the services offered.

### **Fitness to carry on or manage a fostering service**

#### **These 2 Standards were met.**

The Fostering Service Manager is a qualified social worker, who has over ten years' experience of managing fostering services. He holds a BSc and MSc and has recently undertaken a Management Diploma in health and Social Care. The authorities human resources department ensure all staff with access to children complete the required checks and references on appointment.

### **Management of the fostering service**

#### **Of these 2 Standards, 1 was met and 1 was exceeded.**

There are clear management structures and lines of accountability in the Department and these are detailed in the service's Statement of Purpose. Recent reorganisation of elements of the support team have provided improvements to the service coordination, and enabled staff to focus on core roles.

### **Securing and promoting welfare**

#### **Of these 9 Standards, 7 were met and 2 were exceeded.**

Safer Homes Guidelines and Agreements were introduced for all foster carers in November 2003 by the authority. A Statement of Purpose includes a commitment to promoting equality and reducing discrimination, and policies on bullying for children/young people placed in foster care, and there is clear guidance on contact with family members for foster carers. The Looked After Children procedures are used to ensure that the health care needs of children/young people are assessed and recorded. Moving on at 16+ training is arranged for foster carers preparing young people for independence. The Fostering Service works with the authorities Independence Support Team (IST) to ensure young people leaving care are supported to develop the skills they need to live independently.



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

**Of these 9 Standards, 6 were met and 3 were exceeded.**

Recruitment of extra social work and administrative staff posts has been funded in recent years to the present level of staff, and all staff have had enhanced CRB checks. Foster Carers informed the Inspector they felt well supported by the Service, whom they could contact for support or advice at any time. A training programme for Carers has been developed by the Senior practitioner, and there has been a good uptake by Carers during the past year.

**Records**

**These 2 Standards were met.**

The Fostering Service maintains separate files for carers and children/young people. The Royal Borough also maintains a separate file for each looked after child that is the responsibility of the child's allocated social worker. All files seen by the Inspector during this visit were well organised and information was easily located. Written entries in carers' files met required standards of legibility and professionalism.

**Fitness of premises**

**This Standard was met.**

The Fostering Service is based in Social Services offices in the north of the Royal Borough, close to bus routes and Ladbroke Grove underground station. The offices are shared with other social work services for children and adults and some voluntary organisations. Overall, the standard of office accommodation is satisfactory.

**Financial requirements**

**Of these 3 Standards, 1 was exceeded and 2 did not apply to Local Authority services.**

All carers receive an allowance that exceeds the Fostering Network's recommended rate for London. 'Fee paid' carers also receive a taxable fee in addition to the allowance. All carers said they received clear guidance about payments and that they were able to contact their supervising social worker or the Fostering Service administrator if they had any queries regarding allowances or payments.

**Fostering Panels**

**This Standard was exceeded.**

The Inspector observed the Fostering Panel held on 21<sup>st</sup>. March 2005. Following the Panel meeting the Chair was interviewed. The Inspector was encouraged by the composition of the Panel, the quality of reports provided by social workers from the Fostering Service and the Children and Families service.

**Short-term breaks**

**This Standard was met.**

The Fostering Manager confirmed the Service aim is to provide individual short-term care packages, where this met the needs of a child/young person. This would include identifying, and meeting, the needs of the parents.

**Family and friend carers**

**This Standard was met.**

Social workers in the Service assess relatives and friends of looked after children/young people using nationally accepted assessment procedures. All kinship carers have a named supervising social worker and an annual review is completed.

## **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:

YES

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:**

No statutory requirements were made at the last inspection in January 2004. No new statutory requirements are made following this inspection.

## Implementation of Statutory Requirements from Last Inspection

Requirements from last Inspection visit fully actioned?

NA

**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	

**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.

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Compliance</b>	
<b>Comments</b>		

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Compliance</b>	
<b>Comments</b>		

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Compliance</b>	
<b>Comments</b>		

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Compliance</b>	
<b>Comments</b>		

**Lead Regulatory Inspector** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Regulation 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	

## 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

\* 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

4

Survey of placing authorities

NA

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

NO

- Contact with supervising social workers

YES

- Examination of files

YES

Individual interview with manager

YES

Information from provider

YES

Individual interviews with key staff

YES

Group discussion with staff

YES

Interview with panel chair

YES

Observation of foster carer training

NO

Observation of foster panel

YES

Inspection of policy/practice documents

YES

Inspection of records

YES

Interview with individual child

YES

Date of Inspection

14/02/05

Time of Inspection

10.00

Duration Of Inspection (hrs)

27

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 Fostering Team Manager confirmed there are arrangements in place to review the service's statement of purpose annually, and although there are continued plans to produce a more parent and child-friendly version of the statement, this has not been implemented to date. The inspector believes the Statement accurately describes the facilities and services available.



## 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 Fostering Manager is a qualified and very experienced social worker with over ten years' experience of managing fostering services. A number of staff in the team are qualified to degree level and the manager holds a MSc. In addition the Manager has enrolled on the Health and Social Care Management Diploma. The Management team includes the Senior Practitioner, who shares management responsibilities and is additionally responsible for Foster Carers training.

### 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

Personnel records maintained by the local authority for all permanent staff working in the Fostering Service were reviewed. All files contained the required references and checks, and the Inspector was satisfied that systems were in place to ensure that all references/checks were undertaken for new staff, prior to their appointment. The Fostering Service Manager and staff from human resources (HR) confirmed enhanced disclosures from the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) had been received for all staff that had access to children. A separate record is kept by HR of returned disclosures. This was checked by the Inspector and was seen to be well maintained and up to date.

## 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

Managers and staff in the Service have clear job descriptions and all staff were aware of their own roles and responsibilities and the managers of the Service. There are clear management structures and lines of accountability throughout the Department, and these are detailed in the service's published information for service users. Additionally, a quality assurance manager is employed by the department, who has responsibility to evaluate and publish an annual quality audit report.

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

0

Death of a child placed with foster parents.

0

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

0

Serious illness or accident of a child.

0

Outbreak of serious infectious disease at a foster home.

0

Actual or suspected involvement of a child in prostitution.

0

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

0

Serious complaint about a foster parent.

0

Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.

0

Number of complaints made to 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

All staff in the Fostering Service have detailed and comprehensive job descriptions, in addition to person specifications used in recruitment. As noted in Standard 4 there is a clear organisational structure and Managers in the Service and the Department are clear about their specific roles and responsibilities, and this structure is detailed in the Statement of Purpose. Management cover arrangements for the Service are detailed in Standard 2. A number of compliments have been received in the last year, these include a service user complimenting the unit staff on their support, and a national provider complimenting the authority on the Royal Boroughs fostering and adoption web site.

## Securing and Promoting Welfare

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

### Standard 6 (6.1 - 6.9)

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

#### Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

4

The Fostering Team Manager confirmed that Safer Homes Guidelines and Agreements were introduced for all foster carers in November 2003. The Inspector saw copies of agreements on foster carer files reviewed during this inspection. Agreements were signed by foster carers, their supervising social worker and the Fostering Manager. As part of the recruitment process, assessment and recruitment social workers and the prospective carer also complete a safety assessment of the home. Once approved, each carer is reviewed annually by a supervising social worker and a health and safety checklist is completed as part of this review.

### 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?

4

The Statement of Purpose (see Standard 1) includes a commitment to promoting equality and reducing discrimination. The Social Services Department has produced an equality statement and the Manager confirmed that all staff are recruited through an equal opportunities interview and assessment process. All foster carers are assessed using national methods that promote diversity and anti-discriminatory practice. All prospective carers must complete the Choosing to Foster training before approval or as soon as possible afterwards. The training covers promoting diversity and consideration of how each child/young person's ethnic, religious and cultural needs can be met in the foster home. Carers told the Inspector that they were usually provided with Looked After Children documents relating to children/young people, including information on their cultural needs. Young people also said that carers and their social workers were valuable sources of information about cultural resources in the local and wider communities.

**Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.7)**

**Local authority fostering services, and voluntary agencies placing children in their own right, ensure that each child or young person placed in foster care is carefully matched with a carer capable of meeting her/his assessed needs. For agencies providing foster carers to local authorities, those agencies ensure that they offer carers only if they represent appropriate matches for a child for whom a local authority is seeking a carer.**

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

Published information and recruitment policies highlight the authorities commitment to these values. Carers stated they were given sufficient information about each young person at the start of the placement, and confirmed they believed they were well supported by the staff if needed. The Fostering Service Manager and social workers confirmed that culturally appropriate placements would always be made where possible. All fourteen carers who returned confidential questionnaires stated placements were generally appropriate, information provided about young people was adequate, and follow up support was good.

**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?****4**

Fostering team staff informed the Inspector that each young person's social worker is required to provide detailed information, which should include any history of abuse. Staff in the Fostering Service also have access to the young person's records through the authorities data base systems. Carers confirmed that they were made aware of any issues or concerns before a placement started. A policy on bullying of young people placed in foster care is maintained, and carers stated they were required to attend child abuse training facilitated by the unit. Additional support is also available from nursing and clinical psychology services working with looked after children. The Fostering Service Manager maintains a record of all allegations and an annual report is made to the Fostering Panel. This record was reviewed during the inspection.

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

100

%

**Standard 10 (10.1 - 10.9)**

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

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

The Service provides clear guidance on contact with family members for foster carers. Carers informed the Inspector that contact issues were discussed during training courses and as part of the placement agreement agreed for each young person. The fourteen carers who returned questionnaires said young people were supported to maintain contact with friends and family. Arrangements for contact were detailed in the foster care agreements seen by the Inspector on carer's files. Seven young people returned confidential questionnaires and stated that carers supported them to keep in touch with family and friends, and that carers welcomed their friends to visit them in the foster home.

**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

Young people informed the Inspector they were asked for their opinions on the care they receive and believed their views were listened to. The Senior Practitioner of the fostering team informed the Inspector that training also included the value of listening to the views of young people. Each young person in foster care has an allocated social worker and the Royal Borough's Looked After Children review procedures ensure that they are consulted about their care. Supervising social workers from the Fostering Service also informed the Inspector they would speak with young people during monitoring visits to the foster home, and this was confirmed by statements from the young people. All the young people who returned confidential questionnaires said that they had been asked for their opinions about their foster carers and the fostering service, and all saw their social worker in private.

**Standard 12 (12.1 - 12.8)**

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

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

3

Looked After Children procedures are used to ensure that health care needs of young people are assessed and recorded. Appropriate referrals (to health care professional for example) would be made to ensure identified needs were met, and all children were registered with a GP. The fostering manager, supervising social workers and young people confirmed that young people have access to a range of health services. The Children's Resource Team includes the designated Nurse, a substance use worker and clinical psychologist. The Service provides an induction day for all newly approved carers.

**Standard 13 (13.1 - 13.8)**

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

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

4

Pre-inspection information provided by the Fostering Service Manager showed that 27 had missed more than 25 days' schooling. For these young people, support is provided by the social worker, foster carer and Education Officer from the Children's Resource Team to identify appropriate education opportunities. This may involve identifying new placements or supporting continued attendance at the child/young person's school. The Education Officer also advises social workers and foster carers on educational issues. Funding is available from the local authority to purchase personal computers for children in foster care, and all foster carers who returned questionnaires provided a computer for use by young people placed. All seven young people who returned confidential questionnaires said that their carers helped them with their education.

**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**

'Moving on at 16+' training is arranged for foster carers preparing young people for independence. The Fostering Service works with the Royal Borough's Independence Support Team (IST) to ensure young people leaving care have the skills they need to live independently. A specialist worker in the IST advises young people on housing options. The IST is based in the same building as the Fostering Service and the team manager stated they worked closely with colleagues from the team as required. Young people informed the Inspector that carers helped them to learn the skills they would need to live independently, including budgeting, cooking and accessing resources in the local and wider communities.

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

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

### Standard 15 (15.1 - 15.8)

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

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

3

The Manager and social workers in the Fostering Service all have a professional qualification. Since the last inspection there has been some reorganisation of the team and in addition to the two senior staff, twelve social workers are employed, two of whom are locums. The Royal Borough's recruitment policies and procedures are followed for the appointment of all staff, including administrative staff. The Inspector checked the personnel files for ten staff during this inspection. Copies of references and qualifications were seen on all files, and each file contained an enhanced disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau. Disclosures had been received for all staff and the Inspector saw the record of returned Disclosures that is maintained by the Social Services Department's personnel section.

**Total number of staff of the agency:**

18

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

0

### 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?

4

The team has been reorganised to provide separate teams for recruitment/assessment and supervising/supporting foster carers. Staff working in the service were both experienced and knowledgeable regarding their roles. Staff stated they felt supported in their individual roles, participated in team development/briefings and were all involved in issues relating to the team.

**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?**

4

The Service's staffing establishment consists of a Team Manager, one Senior Social Worker, 12 social workers, eight of whom are supervising social workers, three are assessment and recruitment social workers and one (currently vacant) is a children with disabilities development social worker. Recruitment Officer, two administrative support staff and a placements officer complete the team. All social work staff have a professional qualification. There is an ongoing plan for the recruitment of carers, coordinated by the Recruitment Officer. Information packs are provided for all people interested in fostering and visits made to the carer's home by recruitment staff within two weeks of their first enquiry.

**Standard 18 (18.1 - 18.7)**

The fostering service is a fair and competent employer, with sound employment practices and good support for its staff and carers.

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

3

The Royal Borough's recruitment policies and procedures are followed when appointing staff in the Fostering Service. Criminal Records Bureau checks and references are obtained for all new staff before they start work. Staff spoken with during the inspection commented that good quality support and supervision are provided. Each worker has an annual review and a Personal Development Plan is agreed at each review. The Fostering Manager and staff confirmed that they were aware of the Royal Borough's 'whistle-blowing' policy. Posters and leaflets detailing the policy and procedures were displayed around the Fostering Services office. There are health and safety policies for employees and carers. The annual review of each carer also includes completion of a health and safety checklist. Carers told the Inspector that they felt well supported by the Service.

**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

As stated in Standard 18, each member of staff has an annual performance review where a Personal Development Plan is agreed. All staff spoken to stated they had received a wide range of training relevant to their role and needs in the team, and it is acknowledged a comprehensive level of in-house training is provided by the Royal Borough. Administrative staff have completed NVQ training with support from the Department.



**Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)****All staff are properly accountable and supported.****Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****3**

Job Descriptions and Person Specifications are available for all posts in the Fostering Service and these were seen on individual's personnel files. Staff spoken with during the inspection were clear about their role and responsibilities. They confirmed that regular supervision sessions were arranged and their supervisor provides a written record of issues discussed during each session. The Team Manager and Senior Practitioner supervise staff, and social workers confirmed annual appraisals are completed and regular team meetings and team training and development days are facilitated.

**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?****4**

Carers informed the Inspector they had a named supervising social worker and all stated they were able to contact them for support or advice at any time. Carers are provided with detailed advice on working with other agencies, including health services and education. Carers understood the need for, and participated in annual reviews. Thirteen of the carers who returned confidential questionnaires said they were 'very satisfied' with the support provided by the Service. One person stated they considered support to be 'generally satisfactory'. Specific examples of support mentioned by carers were the competency of staff, the interest of social workers in the needs of foster children, and the training available.

**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?****4**

Each foster carer has a Foster Care Agreement with the Social Services Department and the Inspector saw completed agreements on file. Carers confirmed that social workers visit at least monthly, and more frequently in the first few months following approval, a small number of unannounced visits to foster carers may be undertaken. Carers confirmed they are given updated copies of all relevant policies and procedures, and records are maintained of any concerns/complaints made against foster carers. These are reported annually to the Fostering Panel. All foster carers have monthly support group meetings and an excellent range of training is facilitated by the Senior Practitioner.

**Standard 23 (23.1 - 23.9)**

**The fostering service ensures that foster carers are trained in the skills required to provide high quality care and meet the needs of each child/young person placed in their care.**

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

4

The Fostering Manager and social workers confirmed that carers' training needs are reviewed during supervision visits and as part of the annual review. Training is arranged to fit in with carers' lifestyles and includes sessions in the evenings and at weekends, to maximise attendance. Induction for approved carers includes legal issues, Looked After Children procedures, complaints and roles and responsibilities of foster carers. Several carers who returned a confidential questionnaire described the (induction) training as the best thing about the fostering service. Training provided in the last year has included NVQ level 3 caring for children, drug awareness, first aid, and preparing young people for independent living. The inspector considers it significant to the quality of the service provided that a high percentage of carers who returned a confidential questionnaire commented positively on the training provided.

## 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 Fostering Service maintains separate files for carers and young people. The Royal Borough maintains a separate file for each looked after child that is the responsibility of the child's allocated social worker. The system is computerised and social workers from the Fostering Service have access to all children's files. The Fostering Team develops a paper file for each child containing referral details, essential information from the Looked After Children materials and minutes of meetings. The Service also maintains a separate file for each approved foster carer. These files contain copies of reports of monthly monitoring visits made to each carer by the supervising social worker, annual review reports, health and safety checks and other important information. All files seen by the Inspector during this visit were well organised and information was easily located. The storage arrangements for files containing information about young people and carers are satisfactory.

### 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

Separate records are kept for staff, carers, children, complaints and allegations made against foster carers or the Fostering Service. Complaints and allegations are reported to the Fostering Panel annually. Storage arrangements are satisfactory and the Royal Borough has a clear policy on access to records. The files on young people (see Standard 24) are in a form that could easily be transferred to another authority or agency, if required. Staff sign a confidentiality statement as part of their terms and conditions of employment and these were seen on personnel files. Written entries in carers' files meet required standards of legibility and professionalism. The figures below for placements made and placements ended in the past 12 months includes structured respite care placements.

Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:

118

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

X

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

X

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

X

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

X

Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £

300.08

Maximum £

410.37

## Fitness of Premises for use as Fostering Service

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

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

Standard 26 (26.1 - 26.5)

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

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

3

The Fostering Service is based in social services offices in the north of the borough, close to bus routes and Ladbroke Grove underground station. The offices are shared with other social work services and the Citizens Advice Bureau. The Fostering Service has its own office space, with a separate office for the Fostering Manager. Lockable storage is provided for confidential information. A personal computer is provided on each desk to enable staff to access computerised records. Toilets and a small kitchenette are shared with other teams. Overall, the standard of office accommodation is satisfactory.

## 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?

9

This Standard does not apply to Local Authority Fostering Services.

### Standard 28 (28.1 - 28.7)

The financial processes/systems of the agency are properly operated and maintained in accordance with sound and appropriate accounting standards and practice.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

9

This Standard does not apply to Local Authority Fostering Services.

**Standard 29 (29.1 - 29.2)**

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

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

4

The Fostering Manager confirmed that all carers receive an allowance that exceeds the Fostering Network's recommended rate, plus an allowance for outing, birthdays, festivals etc. which is twice the minimum recommended rate. Payments are weekly and administrative staff within the Service manage the system. Carers stated the payments are regular and prompt. Carers also confirmed that they received written guidance on payment of fees and allowances, taxation and other financial issues. All carers said that they were able to contact their supervising social worker or the Fostering Service administrator if they had any queries regarding allowances or payments.

## 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?
The Panel meeting had been cancelled subsequent to the inspection, and this Standard could not be assessed.	0

## 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?
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The Fostering Manager stated the Service would aim to provide individual short-term care packages, where this met the needs of a young person, however it is acknowledged there is a shortage of carers who are willing to offer this kind of placement, especially for children with a disability. The Royal Borough provides clear and detailed information of this service in the policy and assessment documentation.	3
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## Family and Friends as Carers

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

### Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.4)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
Social workers in the Service assess relatives and friends of looked after children/young people using nationally accepted assessment procedures. Social workers work to ensure the significant history and compatibility of a family is fully considered by the service when assessing the suitability of the applicant for fostering. Ongoing assessments ensure the placement continues to remain appropriate and young people placed there are safeguarded.		

**PART C**

**LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY**

**(where applicable)**

**Lay Assessor**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_

**PART D****PROVIDER'S RESPONSE****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

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

Amendments to the report were necessary

NO

Comments were received from the provider

YES

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

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

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

NO

Action plan was received at the point of publication

☐

Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion

☐

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

☐

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

☐

Other: <enter details here>

☐

**Public reports**

It should be noted that all 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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