



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

Fostering Services

Futures For Children

69 College Road

Maidstone

Kent

ME15 6SX

14th July 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

Futures For Children

Tel No

01622 673555

Address

69 College Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 8SX

Fax No

Email Address

Registered Number of IFA

H060000610

Name of Registered Provider

Futures for Children

Name of Registered Manager (if applicable)

Ms Lynn Alison Stout

Date of first registration

26th November 2003

Date of latest registration certificate

26th November 2003

Registration Conditions Apply ?

NO

Date of last inspection

07/05/03

Date of Inspection Visit		14th July 2004	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		09:00 am	
Name of Inspector	1	Sophie Wood	108854
Name of Inspector	2		
Name of Inspector	3		
Name of Inspector	4		
Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable) Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the CSCI. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process.			
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)			
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection		Ms Lyn Stout	

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 Futures For Children. 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.

The 'Futures for Children' fostering agency is based in Maidstone and is currently developing satellite offices in neighbouring counties. It is the intention of the agency to develop small groups of carers, from a wide range of geographical locations, with qualified staff support close by, in line their 'Maidstone' model.

According to its Statement of Purpose, the agency seeks to provide, "a flexible, caring and imaginative foster care service...to give children and young people the opportunity to become valued members of society".

The agency seeks to provide a variety of placements, based upon the presenting needs of the child(ren). These include; short and long term, emergencies, bridging, enhanced, eg. disability / illness, sibling groups and parent and child placements.

All Social Workers employed by the agency are qualified and experienced and other employees include a qualified Director of Therapy and sessional workers. For those young people not in mainstream school, the agency funds a minimum of 10 hours sessional work per week.

The agency provides continued training for carers and is currently focusing upon the NVQ qualification. Out of hours support is provided by the agency staff team via an on call system and carers receive three weeks' holiday pay annually.

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 was the second announced inspection to be conducted under the auspices of the Care Standards Act 2000 and The Fostering Services Regulations 2002. A total of 30 standards were inspected, as the latter two, pertaining to 'Short – Term breaks' and 'Family and Friends as Carers' were not applicable.

It was very positive to note that the two requirements and three recommendations made from the previous inspection of 7/5/03 had been partly or fully implemented and from this visit; 27 Standards were met, three had 'minor shortfalls' and one was found to have exceeded the performance indicators and therefore received a 'commendable score'.

The agency has been extremely busy during the last year in securing additional office space, developing new 'branches' and creating new key positions within the organisation. It was therefore, very positive to note that care has been taken to plan and execute such major changes to occur in a systematic and timely way, so as not to impinge upon the quality of service provided to carers and children.

Below is a summary of the Standards inspected, with greater explanation detailed throughout the main body of the report.

Statement of Purpose (Standard 1):

As was required from last year's inspection, a completed Statement of Purpose had been devised and implemented. The document is detailed and concise, with its contents 'in line' with the elements as described under Regulation 3, Fostering Regulations 2002. A recommendation was made with regards the need to regularly audit and review the written documentation supplied to carers and the agency confirmed its plans to produce a Children's Guide; tailored for younger children, including those with literacy difficulties.

Fitness to Provide or Manage a Fostering Service (Standards 2 –3):

Both standards were inspected and were met. Clear sources of evidence were found to support that an experienced, suitably qualified and experienced staff team runs the agency. Accurate records are maintained, demonstrating that a sound and robust recruitment process continues to be followed.

Management of the Fostering Service (Standards 4 – 5):

Both of the Standards were inspected. One was found to have 'minor shortfalls' pertaining to the evidencing of 'monitoring' and a requirement has been made with regards implementing clear monitoring systems and forwarding a report to the Commission following any such review. Standard 5 was clearly met and Agency staff and Carers informed the inspector that they felt well supported and knew about own and others' responsibilities.

Securing and Promoting Welfare (Standards 6 – 14):

All of the nine standards were inspected and eight were met. Clear policies and procedures

pertaining to matching, contact, health, education and preparing for adulthood were in place and being followed. A rigorous carer recruitment and assessment process was being implemented, (standard 6), and good sources of evidence were seen in respect of 'valuing diversity, (standard 7). With regards the carers and children who took part in the inspection process, clear sources of evidence were found with regards the 'matching' process, (standard 8). It was however recommended that the agency considers the need to develop its own expertise with regards placements involving asylum seeking young people, particularly those who have specific cultural needs and language difficulties. The drive and commitment of one particular carer was commended, however; this does not negate the agency's and responsible authority's obligations to provide routine, appropriate support. Detailed policies and procedures were in place, in accordance with standard 9; the contents of which were known by agency staff, carers and the children spoken with. 'Contact' arrangements were clear and it was evident that the agency actively promotes the positive aspects of this for children. Carers presented as being committed to fulfilling their own responsibilities and children's files contained comprehensive records, which are shared with the responsible authority social worker. Carers, young people, parents and placing authorities reported that the agency makes clear and routine attempts to consult with them, with regards the general running of the agency, in accordance with Standard 11. Standard 12 was recorded to have 'minor shortfalls' with regards the omissions pertaining to health care within children's files and a recommendation was made to review the educational information held regarding young people, in accordance with standard 13, although overall, this standard was met. The evidence seen in respect of standard 14, 'Preparing for Adulthood' was of a very good standard and the agency was advised to ensure that this aspect of its service is distinctly advertised and featured within its Statement of Purpose.

Recruiting, Checking, Managing, supporting and Training Staff and Foster Carers (Standards 15 – 23):

All of the nine Standards were inspected and all were met. A sound recruitment procedure is in place and a perusal of staff records supported this. The inspector was advised that written procedural guidance is currently being reviewed and updated to reflect the practice that currently exceeds the actual written prescribed guidance. Agency staff receive regular supervision and appraisal and training for both social workers and carers was of good quality and covered a broad range of subjects. Although the supervision of staff and carers occurs regularly, the inspector recommended that written records pertaining to these visits /meetings include greater detail and should be 'written up' within an agreed timescale, for example, within a week of the actual meeting.

Records (Standards 24 – 25):

Both of the Standards were inspected. Standard 24 had 'minor shortfalls' pertaining to the information held within children's case records, as a number of omissions and gaps were found in these. A requirement has been made to rectify this.

Standard 25 was met. It was found that all records are securely held at the offices, with only key personnel having access to them. All other administrative records are well –ordered and maintained.

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

This Standard was inspected and was clearly met. New premises have very recently been acquired and equipment and furnishings were being installed at the time of the inspection. The previous building is to be retained by the agency, ensuring that there is plenty of suitable accommodation for social work staff, administrative needs, meetings, private areas and the secure storage of records.

Financial Requirements (Standards 27 – 29):

All three Standards were inspected and all were met. Evidence was seen to support that the agency continues to be 'financially viable' and secures the ongoing services of a registered accountant. Carers confirmed that they are always paid promptly.

Fostering Panels (Standard 30):

This Standard was found to be a particular strength of the agency. Through reading records, meeting with panel members and attending a Panel meeting, sufficient evidence was obtained in order to commend this standard.

Short – Term Breaks (Standard 31):

This standard was not applicable.

Family and Friends as Carers (Standard 32):

This standard was not applicable.

This was a very positive inspection, reflected by only three Statutory Requirements being made. Clear evidence was found throughout the course of the inspection to indicate that the agency is committed to working in partnership with the Commission and all matters discussed at the feedback meeting were well –received. The inspector wishes to thank all of those who took part and looks forward to receiving the agency's 'Action Plan' in due course.

Reports and Notifications to the Local Authority and Secretary of State

(Local Authority Fostering Services Only)

The following statutory Reports or Notifications are to be made under the Care Standards Act as a result of the findings of this inspection:

Report to the Secretary of State under section 47(3) of the Care Standards Act 2000 that the Commission considers the Local Authority's fostering service satisfies the regulatory requirements:

NO

Notice to the Local Authority under section 47(5) of the Care Standards Act 2000 of failure(s) to satisfy regulatory requirements in their fostering service which are not substantial, and specifying the action the Commission considers the Authority should take to remedy the failure(s), informing the Secretary of State of that Notice:

NO

Report to the Secretary of State under section 47(4)(a) of the Care Standards Act of a failure by a Local Authority fostering service to satisfy regulatory requirements which is not considered substantial:

NO

Report to the Secretary of State under section 47(1) of the Care Standards Act 2000 of substantial failure to satisfy regulatory requirements by a Local Authority fostering service:

NO

The grounds for the above Report or Notice are:

Implementation of Statutory Requirements from Last Inspection

Requirements from last Inspection visit fully actioned?

YES

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.

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Lead Inspector

Sophie Wood

Signature



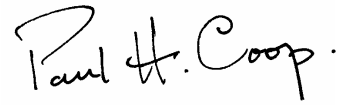
Second Inspector

Signature

**Regulation
Manager**

Paul Coop

Signature



Date

7/1/05

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	42(1)(a)(b) (2)	FS4	<p>The registered person shall establish and maintain a system for-</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(a) monitoring the matters as set out in Schedule 7 at appropriate intervals; and</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(b) improving the quality of foster care provided by the fostering agency.</p> <p>The registered person shall supply to the Commission a report in respect of any review conducted by him for the purposes of paragraph (1).</p>	Action plan to be received by CSCI by 14/2/05
2	15(1)	FS12	The fostering service provider shall promote the health and development of children placed with foster parents. This requirement is made within the context of the fostering service ensuring it holds accurate and updated records / information pertaining to the health care needs of the children currently placed.	Action plan to be received by CSCI by 14/2/05
3	22	FS24	The fostering service provider shall maintain and keep up to date the records as specified in Schedule 2, fostering regulations 2002.	Action plan to be received by CSCI by 14/2/05

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	FS1	It is recommended that the fostering agency produce a Children's Guide, tailored specifically towards younger children and those with literacy difficulties.
2	FS1	It is recommended that the agency conduct regular audits of the written information provided to foster carers, to ensure this remains up to date, given that such information is provided in a 'loose leaf' format.
3	FS3	It is recommended that the agency pursue the CRB Department for clarification following the advice received regarding levels of Disclosure checks for administrative staff.
4	FS8	It is recommended that the agency further develops its own expertise with regards 'trans racial' / 'asylum –seeking' placements in order to best support the carers and children of such placements.
5		It is recommended that the agency further develop its reviewing process with regards measuring educational outcomes for children in its care.
6		It is recommended that the agency further develop and advertise its service for young people who are making the transition into adulthood.
7		It is recommended that supervision notes pertaining to agency staff and carers contain greater detail, in particular timescales, outcomes and responsibilities.

* 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	YES
• Directors of Social services	YES
• Child protection officer	YES
• Specialist advisor (s)	YES
• Local Foster Care Association	YES
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	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	NO
Observation of foster carer training	YES
Observation of foster panel	YES
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Interview with individual child	YES
Date of Inspection	23/07/04
Time of Inspection	09.00
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	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
---------------------------	---------------	---

Further to the requirement made from the previous inspection, a complete Statement of Purpose had been devised and implemented and its contents were found to be in accordance with the elements as listed under of Regulation 3, Fostering Services Regulations 2002.

The document clearly outlines the aims and objectives of the agency and is subject to regular review and where necessary, amendment.

Written guidance for agency staff and carers was consistent with the aims and objectives of the Statement of Purpose and those interviewed spoke very positively, stating that the agency communicates effectively and routinely updates its written information. Given that much of this is 'loose leaf', the inspector advised that periodic checks be made during support visits, to ensure that the most 'up to date' information continues to be held by the carers.

Children and young people are provided with an information pack and this includes; a welcome letter describing the role of the agency, guidance on bullying, how to make a complaint, how to contact the Children's Rights Director and information about leaving care. Young people informed the inspector that agency staff and carers had provided them with clear and sound information about the agency upon their arrival.

The inspector was pleased to be advised that the agency is currently seeking to commission a service to review its Children's Guide, in order to produce a format aimed at younger children and those with literacy difficulties, as it is felt that the current format is more suited to older children.

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 inspector found the agency to be led by a professionally qualified and competent management team.

Much reorganisation and development had taken place over the last year and it was very positive to note that due consideration had been given with regards a clear vision as to how the agency plans to expand without disrupting the existing team of staff and carers.

The agency manager has been promoted to Director of Policy and is currently supporting the new manager to settle into her role.

Excellent lines of communication exist between all departments and there are clear management structures in place pertaining to finance, administrative personnel and support staff.

All of the Directors possess sound experience and expertise pertaining to the running of a fostering agency.

Standard 3 (3.1 - 3.4)

Any persons carrying on or managing the fostering service are suitable people to run a business concerned with safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The agency implements a sound and robust recruitment procedure, evidence of which was seen through the random selection of a number of personnel files.

In accordance with a recommendation made last year, the agency now follows up all written references with telephone enquiries.

Every file seen contained 'up to date' CRB checks and satisfactory references were held in all files.

The agency had received conflicting advice as to the type of CRB check, which should be requested on behalf of administrative staff and was advised by the inspector that this should be an Enhanced Disclosure, given the nature of information that such personnel may have access to in the course of their work.

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?

2

Clear lines of communication were seen to be in place and staff from all departments were sure of their own roles and responsibilities and those of others. This is being further assisted through the review of job descriptions, currently taking place.

Financial policies and procedures were clear and purchasing agencies were being routinely informed of the agency's charges for services.

Whilst regular visits to carers continue, the inspector noted a number of delays in terms of recording the outcomes of these in writing and was concerned that this omission could impede the monitoring process. Given the agency's length of operation and development plans, the inspector would expect to see greater evidence of 'monitoring' and 'quality assurance' more generally, hence; the Management team is reminded of the matters as listed under Schedule 7, Fostering Regulations 2002 and the 'Review of Quality of Care', as described under Regulation 42, with regards producing a report in respect of such monitoring and supplying a copy to the Commission.

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.

1

Outbreak of serious infectious disease at a foster home.

0

Actual or suspected involvement of a child in prostitution.

0

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

0

Serious complaint about a foster parent.

0

Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.

1

Number of complaints made to 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**

Clear sources of evidence were seen to support that the agency is managed effectively and efficiently.

As previously stated, all of the staff interviewed were clear about their own roles and those of others within the organisation and this is being further clarified through a review of all job descriptions. The manager is in the process of 'handing over' to the new post holder, following her own promotion and during this transition, clear 'deputising' arrangements have been implemented and followed.

Securing and Promoting Welfare

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 6 (6.1 - 6.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

Through the inspection of carers' files and Panel meeting minutes, the inspector found clear evidence to demonstrate that carers' homes continue to be assessed, in terms of both physical suitability and safety. Such areas are inspected by the agency on an annual basis and are an integral feature of carers' annual reviews.

The inspector visited four separate houses and found that each were clean, well – decorated and free from any obvious hazards. One home's kitchen was subject to major refurbishment and the carer had taken clear precautions to maintain a safe environment during this period. Whereby any necessary equipment was needed to maintain safety; for example, cupboard restrictors, baby gates, etc, such items were in place and carers providing transport for those in their care had sufficient insurance cover and where necessary, car seats for younger children.

A perusal of carers' files provided evidence to demonstrate that ongoing training is provided with regards 'health and safety' and all carers had been written to by the agency advising them of the inspection dates; reminding them that they may need to be interviewed as part of this process. Those seen by the inspector are thanked for their openness, honesty and cooperation.

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

Written records demonstrated that all carers are required to attend training pertaining to 'equality and diversity' and good evidence of 'matching', in accordance with the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of children was also seen.

Training records pertaining to agency social workers demonstrated that pertinent courses continue to be attended, with recent examples including; 'children and disability' and 'attachment and loss'.

All of the carers interviewed demonstrated a sound commitment with regards promoting children's feelings of self – worth and confidence and the inspector was particularly impressed with their continued emphasis upon working positively with the birth parents of those in their care.

One carer is particularly commended for her efforts in accommodating an asylum –seeking youngster, under very difficult and traumatic circumstances. The progress made in such a short space of time with regards establishing support networks, college classes and assistance to learn 'english' is commendable; supported by a direct quote from the young person, " I feel safe with 'auntie', I never want to leave here".

Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.7)

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

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

The inspector examined carers' files; in terms of their backgrounds, experience and approval category against the files of the child(ren) placed with them at the time of the inspection. It was positive to find written evidence to support that the presenting needs of the child(ren) had indeed been carefully considered in determining which carers to initially approach at the referral stage. It was also positive to note that a number of referrals had been 'turned down' as the agency felt it did not have the 'right' carer(s) with a vacancy at the time of receiving a specific request for a placement.

All of the carers interviewed confirmed that the agency only approaches them with potential referrals deemed to be appropriate, based on the information supplied by the placing authority and those carers who do not wish to accommodate emergency placements are not asked to do so.

A number of questionnaires returned by carers stated that the agency are supportive and helpful during this key period and make every attempt to find out as much information as possible when a child is initially referred. Documentation on files was seen to support that the agency member of staff taking the initial call records pertinent details and placing authorities are 'chased' where necessary for additional information in order that an appropriate match can be made.

There were occasions where the inspector was advised that some information has been 'slow' to come through from placing authorities, which would have been beneficial for all parties to know about at the beginning. It is recommended that the agency share this feedback with placing authorities on the carers' behalf.

With regards one particular placement, the inspector discussed with the agency, the need to further explore and develop the agency's own expertise in supporting transracial / transcommunity placements, if this is an area it wishes to continue with. It is also recommended that the agency monitors the support provided by the placing authority regarding this particular placement, given its obligations under standard 8.6

Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8)

The fostering service protects each child or young person from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and deprivation.

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

The Foster Carer Information Pack holds clear and detailed policies and procedures pertaining to bullying, safe caring skills, behaviour - management and recognising signs of abuse.

It is a requirement of the agency that all carers 'sign up' to their Foster Carer Agreement, which requires the implementation of these procedures and all of the carers files inspected held copies of such written agreements.

In addition, such topics are also included within the carers' rolling training programme and documented evidence of attendance was seen.

Through visiting carers and children in their own homes, the inspector was able to explore how such guidance is understood and implemented in practice. Young people confirmed the application of sensible and understandable rules by their carers and those who have endured either bullying at school, or other forms of distress, confirmed the positive support

they had received in response, from their carers and members of the agency staff team. The carers interviewed demonstrated a sound understanding of the agency's policies and procedures in respect of appropriate methods of behaviour management and the actions required of them in the event of a child in their care being 'missing'. They also provided the inspector with clear examples as to how they would report any concerns about a child in their care to the agency without delay.

Written documentation held at the office detailed how the agency continues to investigate and evaluate any information it receives with regards allegations of neglect or abuse of a child in foster care. The inspector was able to confirm that other relevant agencies are informed and included, demonstrating that clear child protection protocols are followed by carers and agency staff.

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

98

%

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 agency has clear policies and procedural guidance with regards promoting positive family contact for youngsters in its care and this is effectively communicated to carers. Written information was seen within children's files, describing the contact arrangements agreed between the placing authority and the agency. Evidence was subsequently seen to demonstrate that such visits are indeed being accommodated in a variety of ways. These include the carers themselves either taking a child to an agreed venue or support staff employed by the agency providing this service. In each case, clear written records are maintained of such visits, the contents of which are forwarded to the placing authority social worker.

Those carers interviewed demonstrated a sound understanding as to the importance of this aspect of their role and remained committed to supporting such visits, even when issues or difficulties arise. They further stated that the agency provides sound support in the event of such situations when they do occur.

One young person told the inspector that his regular visits with his mother are very important to him and he appreciates that his carers make sure that these visits continue. He was very disappointed that the placing authority has not maintained visits with some of his siblings and evidence was seen to demonstrate that the carers continue to pursue this issue on his behalf.

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
----------------------------------	----------------------	----------

Written evidence obtained from children’s questionnaires was positive, demonstrating that the majority feel they are regularly consulted and listened to, about their care. Those children seen throughout the course of the inspection told the inspector that their carers and the agency staff regularly ask for their opinions and help them to prepare for their own review meetings.

Clear and detailed literature is provided within the children’s information pack with regards ‘how to make a complaint’ and the inspector was advised by a number of children that they fully understood this process. As has been previously mentioned, the agency is reviewing such documentation and guidance with regards the younger children accommodated in an attempt to ensure that they understand the mechanisms and agencies available to them. Further written evidence was seen on files to support that birth families have been given the opportunity to contribute their views about their child’s care and placing authorities are asked for written feedback at the end of every placement.

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?	2
----------------------------------	----------------------	----------

All of the children visited throughout the course of the inspection were registered with local health care services and had attended any such health care appointments as were appropriate to their needs.

Written guidance and training courses are provided by the agency pertaining to child development and health and hygiene issues. Carers demonstrated a sound awareness as to positive health promotion, including the provision of healthy, nutritional meals and were making written notes of all health issues and appointments attended by the child(ren) in their care.

Upon reading the children’s files held at the agency office, the inspector noted some omissions within the pro forma documentation used by the agency and this included some of the health care sections. A requirement is therefore made for these files to be reviewed and updated.

Standard 13 (13.1 - 13.8)

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

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

The agency has clear policies and procedures in place pertaining to meeting the educational needs of the children placed and the 'responsibilities' of carers, with regards supporting children in school, are clearly outlined within the Foster Carer Agreement.

All, but one, of the young people seen by the inspector were attending school or college placements and an eighteen – month old was attending a day nursery. The carers of a recently admitted individual were able to demonstrate the positive steps they had already taken in researching an appropriate local education facility on his behalf and the carers of another child described a very positive working relationship with the school he has remained in since leaving the family home and moving in with his carers. Another carer told the inspector of the positive relationship she enjoys with her local primary school, attended by two of the three siblings she looks after. It was extremely positive to join her in collecting them from school and they walked home, telling the inspector all about their day.

The majority of the children's files seen held relevant educational information, including copies of Personal Educational Plans, Educational review meeting minutes and where appropriate, SEN documentation. Others held less information, however, written evidence was seen to support that the agency has 'chased' placing authorities for this. A recommendation is made to ensure this information is received and the agency itself believes it could improve upon how it evaluates outcomes for children with regards education. A verbal undertaking was given by the manager that this will be prioritised.

Standard 14 (14.1 - 14.5)

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

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

The agency has a number of carers who routinely provide placements for 'older' children and files in respect of such placements were inspected. Clear details as to the type and nature of support required in order to assist with the transition into adulthood was recorded and one young person who has now left school was interviewed. He told the inspector of the ways in which his placement has changed over recent years, in that he is "treated like an adult" and has received support to find employment. Both he and his carers wish for the placement to continue and this was recorded within written records. This was an excellent example of a long –term placement continuing into early adulthood and becoming a supported living environment, whereby the young person is entering the next stage of his life, with less intrusive support and guidance from people he trusts and who know him well.

The inspector was surprised that this aspect of the service is not featured within the agency's Statement of Purpose and advised the manager to review this. From the example seen and explored, the inspector was impressed with the provision and would encourage the agency to further develop and advertise this aspect of its service.

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 is currently reviewing the agency's recruitment policy and procedure and it was noted that the actual recruitment practice exceeds the details of the current written guidance. Following a recommendation made from last year's inspection, telephone verification of written references received are now being made.

The inspector randomly selected a number of personnel files and found that each held suitable references and CRB checks, notwithstanding the omission within one Administrative worker's file. However, this was addressed and found to be subject to lack of advice from the CRB department.

It was very positive to find that all Social Work staff possessed sound previous experience, in accordance with performance indicator 15.5 and records pertaining to the current recruitment campaign showed evidence that only those applicants with sound relevant training and experience were being considered for interviews. The inspector also noted the generous terms and conditions being offered, demonstrating the agency's commitment to providing optimum and rewarding working conditions for its staff.

Total number of staff of the agency:

34

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?

3

Through the interviewing of staff and perusal of written documentation, it was clearly evident that lines of responsibility and accountability are known and followed.

Different 'departments', for example, Social Workers and Administrative personnel are line – managed by suitably experienced and qualified managers, with ultimate overall responsibility being placed with the Agency Manager and Directors.

All of those spoken with talked positively about lines of communication and the inspector saw evidence to support that those with additional management responsibilities were given sufficient time and resources to fulfil this aspect of their role, for example, a reduced working caseload for those with supervision responsibilities. It was also positive to note that the successful internal candidate for the Manager's post is to receive additional relevant training to prepare her for her new position.

Further training records were inspected and it was evident that, through regular supervision

meetings, individuals are able to review own practice and make application for relevant external courses. Those staff interviewed stated that additional training is a particular strength of the agency and the written records seen, pertaining to courses already taken and those booked for the following year, clearly support this view.

Each member of staff had a written job description and contract of employment and it was positive to note that these are currently being reviewed, with input from the staff themselves. All of those interviewed confirmed that they had been furnished with relevant policies and procedures, in accordance with performance indicator 16.16 and that these had been covered throughout their induction period.

All of the above evidence was further compounded through speaking with carers, who advocated that their queries, concerns and requests for support are responded to expediently and by those individuals with the expertise needed.

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

Written records, supported by verbal contributions from staff members, indicate that the agency has no problems with retaining staff. One comment included, "In 20 years of Social Work, this is the best place I have ever worked".

Through the perusal of personnel records, it was evident that the qualified Social Work team possess a wealth of varying areas of expertise, including, training, counselling, attachment and loss and working with disability. Hence, caseloads were seen to reflect such areas of expertise and professional interest and, as previously stated, the content of individual caseloads are routinely reviewed in an attempt to ensure they are manageable.

Only those staff who are qualified and experienced to do so, are required to undertake the assessment of potential carers and the written documentation inspected supported that this happens in practice. All such staff had received relevant training and were confident in completing this task.

Assessment information was seen to be comprehensive and detailed, with many visits taking place. Carers spoken with advised the inspector that such assessments were thorough, though conducted in a professional and courteous manner.

Close scrutiny of such documentation evidenced that the areas as outlined under performance indicator 17.7 were included and every carer interviewed stated that the process had really encouraged them to think through their own past experiences and motivation for pursuing this career. On some occasions, the assessment process was terminated either by the agency or the prospective carer and in other instances, further training and support was offered before approval could be granted. Each example of the above further supports that the agency uses the assessment process to recruit only those individuals with the desired expertise and motivation to become professional and competent foster carers.

Standard 18 (18.1 - 18.7)

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

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

Both written records and verbal responses from carers confirmed that the agency provides continued 'out of hours' support. This is provided through an 'on call' rota, covered by the agency staff.

Inspection of carers' files demonstrated that support visits occur regularly and are recorded and this was confirmed by those carers interviewed. The inspector advised the manager that some of these visits, whilst occurring a number of weeks previously, had not yet been 'written up' and a verbal undertaking was given by the manager to address this.

A detailed and comprehensive health and safety policy was in place and copies of this are given to all agency staff members and carers. Documented evidence of sufficient public liability insurance was also seen.

Carers and staff demonstrated to the inspector a clear understanding of the agency's 'Whistle blowing' policy and procedure.

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**

Records of training, past and planned, were seen in respect of both carers and agency staff members and a training session, pertaining to 'child protection' was attended by the inspector. As is often the case, such courses are supplied by an approved external agent and both carers and agency staff, 'new' and 'old' attend. Carers spoken with on this occasion told the inspector that meeting experienced carers and spending time with the agency staff is as valuable as the course content itself.

The inspector reviewed training documentation and was pleased to note the range of courses it funds for its staff. Carers confirmed that they are required to attend a set quota of courses each year and this was further evidenced through the inspection of annual review records.

The agency's commitment in supporting carers to obtain the NVQ Award was particularly pleasing to note.

Standard 20 (20.1- 20.5)

All staff are properly accountable and supported.

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

Every member of staff interviewed spoke most positively regarding the ongoing support received from the agency, in terms of professional guidance, development and promotion opportunities and, where relevant, on a 'personal' basis also.

It was clearly evident that the staff team is a well – organised and supported group.

Written records were seen in respect of regular supervision, appraisal and staff meetings.

The inspector advised the manager that the content of such records, in particular, supervision meeting minutes, would benefit from greater depth and clarity, for instance, clear definition as to actions required and timescales for outcomes.

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

The agency works to clearly defined policies, procedures and protocols with regards the nature, frequency and types of support that it provides to carers. Written Foster Carer Agreements clearly outline the service that carers can expect from the agency and the responsibilities and conduct expected of them, as employees.

Although the inspector noted some omissions within carers' documentation, pertaining to support visits, it was evident that this was an administrative task concerned with 'writing them up' and that the actual visits had occurred regularly.

Overall, carers were very clear about their own responsibilities and felt that they were well – supported by the agency staff.

Annual review documentation was inspected and this was seen to be well –prepared, in time for the annual review date and forwarded in good time to Panel members.

Carers and children placed understood the roles of the agency social workers and their own responsible authority social worker. They commented upon good lines of communication and said that the agency always responds appropriately at times of crises.

One carer, with a particularly 'complex' placement felt that more could have been done on a 'practical level' by both the agency and responsible authority in the early days of the placement and this feedback was shared with the agency, who received this as a constructive comment and one which they had anticipated. The agency also agreed with the carer in that increased effort is needed with regards establishing carer support groups for those households farther away from the Head Office. It is noted that this aspect is a particular reason as to why the Organisation is working towards developing satellite offices within particular geographical areas.

Standard 22 (22.1 - 22.10)**The fostering service is a managed one that provides supervision for foster carers and helps them to develop their skills.****Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****3**

All of the carers' files seen held copies of written Foster Carer Agreements, which were signed and dated by the carers and the agency and included all of the elements as listed under Schedule 5 of the Fostering Regulations 2001.

Carers receive regular support visits from a designated agency social worker and a number of these are 'unannounced'. Each carer interviewed confirmed the receipt of written policies and procedural guidance from the agency and stated that this is routinely updated and distributed.

The Carers interviewed demonstrated a clear understanding of the Agency's Complaint's Procedure and knew exactly how the procedure would be implemented with regards a complaint being made about them as carers. A separate 'log' pertaining to complaints / allegations is held centrally at the Agency's Head Office and this was scrutinised by the inspector. Information was appropriately held, and it was evident that the management team respond swiftly and refer to external agencies appropriately.

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

Records indicated that all carers had received induction training upon first joining the agency. They were all extremely positive about the agency's planned induction programme, which includes meeting with established carers, in order for them to benefit from the experiences of others.

It was positive to note that training programmes incorporate the needs of couples, for instance; bearing in mind when partners have a separate full - time occupation and where there are child - care issues. Given such circumstances, courses may be offered at weekends and /or 'after work'.

Carers are required to complete evaluation sheets after every training course and the inspector noted that every annual review report inspected held a section pertaining to the recommended future training needs that would benefit the carers and the child(ren) currently placed with them.

Records

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 24 (24.1 - 24.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

The agency holds written policy and procedural guidance pertaining to the written information that must be held on both carers and children's files. In the main, such documentation was in place and the omissions that were noted were communicated to the manager throughout the course of the inspection and a requirement has been made regarding this aspect. Carers received clear guidance from the Agency in terms of completing 'Life Story Work' with children and evidence of this was seen throughout the visits to Carers' homes. All information recorded about children placed being regularly forwarded to the responsible authority social worker.

The reasons as to why each child was 'in foster care' were recorded on children's files, as were the intended duration and purpose of the placement.

The most common 'complaint' received from Carers concerned the lack of information received from Placing Authorities. The inspector noted through examining children's files, that where this had occurred, the agency continued to pursue the department, in writing, requesting that any such outstanding, pertinent information be forwarded.

Standard 25 (25.1 - 25.13)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The agency works to its own written procedural guidance pertaining to the content, storage and sharing of the written information held in respect of carers and children. All such records were securely stored, with only key personnel having access to them.

Notwithstanding the previous comments made regarding the omissions noted, the majority of written records seen were detailed, legible, signed and dated.

A clear system was in place pertaining to records held about staff, carers, children, allegations, complaints and notifications. It was evident that such records are routinely monitored and reviewed by senior personnel within the agency and a requirement has already been made, under standard 4, with regards compiling reports and forwarding their findings to the Commission.

Written guidance was seen in respect of children accessing their own records and the older children spoken with understood this procedure.

Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:			32
Number of placements made by the agency in the last 12 months:			28
Number of placements made by the agency which ended in the past 12 months:			25
Number of new foster carers approved during the last 12 months:			6
Number of foster carers who left the agency during the last 12 months:			3
Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £	336	Maximum £	336

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 inspector visited the current Head Office site and was also invited to tour the newly acquired premises, situated a few minutes' walk away, on the outskirts of Maidstone town centre.

The manager explained that, due to the continued growth of the agency, both premises will be maintained; with one office to be used mainly by the social work team and the other for administrative and finance purposes.

It was evident that much work had already been completed, in terms of office equipment, new communication systems and furniture and fittings. Both premises were secure.

Ample space is now available for the storage of confidential information and meeting rooms and the new premises are located in particularly pleasant surroundings with ample parking spaces and outdoor areas.

Financial Requirements

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- The agency fostering services are financially viable and appropriate and timely payments are made to foster carers.

Standard 27 (27.1 - 27.3)

The agency ensures it is financially viable at all times and has sufficient financial resources to fulfil its obligations.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The agency has a dedicated finance team and is routinely audited by an external accountant. Written policies and procedures were in place and throughout the course of the inspection, no evidence was found to indicate any difficulties in respect of 'financial viability'.

Standard 28 (28.1 - 28.7)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The agency works to clear, prescribed protocols regarding financial procedures and a registered accountant regularly audits the accounts.
 All of the staff of the agency spoken with were fully conversant with procedures pertaining to expenditure, (including the recording of this), on behalf of the agency.
 staff salaries, 'terms and conditions', extensive support to carers, (including on –call 24hrs per day), the provision of 'quality' training and the capital investment in new premises further supported that the agency is sufficiently funded to meet its Statement of Purpose.
 Evidence was seen within children's files whereby the agency had provided the placing authority with a clear description and 'breakdown' of the cost of a placement, whenever this has been requested.

Standard 29 (29.1 - 29.2)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The inspector saw documented evidence to support that Foster Carer Allowances are reviewed annually. Those carers visited and interviewed confirmed that this happens in practice.

Further written evidence was seen to support that allowances and any additional expenses are agreed prior to a placement commencing.

Throughout the interviews and from the questionnaires received, no adverse comments were made with regards carers' payments from the agency, however; one carer stated that she had 'struggled' to provide necessary items for her mother and baby placement and had raised this with the placing authority. This information was shared with the agency manager at the feedback meeting.

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?

4

This aspect was a particular strength of the agency; in terms of the calibre, relevant experiences and expertise of the Panel members and the professional manner in which the Panel meeting observed by the inspector was conducted.

The agency has very clear and explicit written guidance pertaining to the role and function of the Panel and this is shared with all of the carers. A file is held, containing a portfolio of all of the Panel members and the carers spoken with said they had all found having this information to be extremely valuable and that it helped to put them at ease prior to their first and subsequent attendance at Panel meetings.

Minutes of Panel meetings were detailed and explicit and the Panel members spoken with demonstrated a sound understanding of their role and function.

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?
---------------------------	---------------

This standard was not applicable.

Family and Friends as Carers

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.4)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	9
---------------------------	---------------	---

This standard was not applicable.

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 23/07/04 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

NO

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

NO

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 14/02/05, 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

YES

Action plan was received at the point of publication

YES

Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion

YES

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

NO

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

NO

Other: <enter details here>

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, Nicholas Barnsby of Futures for Children, 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, Nicholas Barnsby of Futures for Children, 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.

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

Telephone: 020 7979 2000
Fax: 020 7979 2111

National Enquiry Line: 0845 015 0120
www.csci.org.uk

S0000036638.V161512.R02

© This report may only be used in its entirety. Extracts may not be used or reproduced without the express permission of the Commission for Social Care Inspection



The paper used in this document is supplied from a sustainable source