



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

Fostering Services

London Borough of Redbridge Fostering Service

Station Road

Barkingside

Ilford

Essex

IG6 1NB

21st October 2004

Commission for Social Care Inspection

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

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

The role of CSCI is to:

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

Inspection Methods & Findings

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

The 4-point scale ranges from:

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

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

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

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

FOSTERING SERVICE INFORMATION

Local Authority Fostering Service?

YES

Name of Authority

London Borough of Redbridge Fostering Service

Address

Station Road Centre,
Station Road, Barkingside, Ilford, Essex, IG6 1NB

Local Authority Manager

Ms Ruth Holmes

Tel No:

020 8708 7870

Address

Station Road Centre,
Station Road, Barkingside, Ilford, Essex, IG6 1NB

Fax No:

020 8708 7887

Email Address

ruth.holmes@redbridge.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

5/2/04

Date of Inspection Visit		1 st – 21st October 2004	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		09:30 am	
Name of Inspector	1	Ms Harina Morzeria	073519
Name of Inspector	2	N/A	
Name of Inspector	3	N/A	
Name of Inspector	4	N/A	
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.		N/A	
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)		N/A	
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection		Ms Ruth Holmes – Principal Officer for the fostering & adoption service	

Introduction to Report and Inspection

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Reports and Notifications to the Local Authority and Secretary of State

Implementation of Statutory Requirements from last Inspection

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

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Part D: Provider's Response

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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 London Borough of Redbridge Fostering Service. The inspection findings relate to the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services published by the Secretary of State under sections 23 and 49 of the Care Standards Act 2000, for independent and local authority fostering services respectively.

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

The report will show the following:

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

This report is a public document.

INSPECTION VISITS

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

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED.

The London Borough of Redbridge Fostering & Adoption Service is located at the Station Road Centre, Station Road, Barkingside, Ilford. The principal officer for the service is Ruth Holmes, and the management responsibility within the team is shared between three team managers, who provide management support across the two teams for fostering and adoption.

The principal management responsibility for social workers in the fostering support team lies with Rose Roach De Cordova.

The teams are split into two sections, the development team and placement support team. The development team provide recruitment, training and assessment of foster carers, with the support team providing post approval support to foster carers as well as linking children and foster carers.

The fostering service provides:

Recruitment of foster carers

Training for prospective and approved foster carers

Assessment of prospective foster carers

Presentation of assessment reports to the fostering panel

Fostering placements - short term, shared cared/respice, pre-adoptive and permanent placements and placements with friends and family.

Post linking support

Annual foster carer reviews

Investigation of complaints/concerns regarding foster carers

Monthly drop in for foster carers

Flexi carers scheme

Training events

Telephone helpline (operated by two foster carers)

PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

Inspector's Summary

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

The inspection of the London Borough of Redbridge Fostering Service was undertaken over a period from 1st October to 26th October 2004. The inspection included visits to four foster carers' homes, discussions with foster children, and foster carers, attendance at a consultation meeting for foster carers, attendance at a training session and a joint event for carers and staff plus discussion with a range of staff and support personnel as well as viewing files and records.

The inspector was pleased to note that the principal officer and the staff team have made concerted efforts to meet the National minimum Standards and improve the level of support offered to the foster carers, particularly the amount of training offered, which the foster carers have found beneficial.

Statement of Purpose (Standard 1)

This standard was partly met. There is a clear statement of the aims and objectives of the fostering service and of the services and facilities they provide. A children's guide to the fostering service is also available. However, the inspector noted that this is not being distributed to children placed in foster care by the placing social workers. A requirement has been made relating to this standard.

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

Both the standards were assessed and met by the fostering service. The principal officer and her team managers possess the necessary knowledge and skills to manage the service effectively. At the time of inspection they were found to be suitable people to run a service concerned with safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Management of the fostering service (Standards 4-5)

Both the standards were assessed and found to be met. The fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently and there are systems in place for monitoring the fostering service and ensuring quality performance.

Securing and promoting welfare (Standards 6-14)

Seven of the nine standards were assessed and met. Two were partly met. At this inspection the inspector was satisfied that the service makes available foster carers who provide a safe, healthy and nurturing environment. A policy and procedure is in place to promote diversity and equality. However appropriate matches for a child is reliant on the availability of suitable carers and sufficient, comprehensive information being received from the social work teams responsible for placing the children. The fostering service is to be mindful, where trans-racial placements take place, that the foster family is provided with additional training, support and information to enable the carers to provide the child/young person with the best possible care.

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

Seven of the nine standards assessed were met, two were partly met. The people who work in or for the fostering service are suitable to work with children and young people. Staff confirmed that they receive support, supervision and training opportunities to carry out their duties.

A training programme has been implemented which foster carers confirmed is helpful and

relevant.

The fostering service strategy for working with and supporting carers to be fully implemented especially when childcare reviews take place.

Records (Standards 24-25)

Of the two standards assessed, one was met and one was partly met. The fostering service do attempt to ensure that all appropriate records are kept in relation to each child and young person. However, foster carers need to be made aware of the importance of maintaining and keeping up to date and comprehensive records for each young person in their care and ensuring that these are accessible to the relevant professionals.

Fitness of premises (Standard 26)

This standard was met. From observation of the offices occupied by the fostering service the inspector was satisfied that the premises are appropriate for the purpose in accordance with this standard and the Fostering Services Regulations.

Financial requirements (Standards 27 – 29)

Two of the three standards assessed were met. One was partly met. The financial systems in place are operated and maintained in accordance with sound financial practices. Foster carers allowances and expenses are paid promptly and are reviewed annually.

The fostering service to ensure that prompt payments are made to foster carers for any out of pocket expenses they incur following an emergency placement of children.

Fostering Panels (Standard 30)

This standard was fully inspected at the previous inspection and met. The inspector was informed that there are no changes to the way the panel operates.

Clear written policies and procedures are in place. The panel is organised efficiently and effectively so as to ensure that good quality decisions are made about the approval of foster carers, with the objective to promote and safeguard the welfare of children in foster care.

Short – term breaks (Standard 31)

This standard was met.

The fostering service have an agreement with a voluntary agency to provide the majority of respite care placements for children with disabilities. The arrangements recognise that parents remain the main carers for the child.

Family and friend carers (Standard 32)

This standard was met.

A kinship policy and procedures are in place. Adequate mechanisms are in place for assessing and approving family and friends as carers.

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:

YES

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:

A Notice to the Secretary of State under section 47(5) of the Care Standards Act of a failure by a Local Authority fostering service to satisfy regulatory requirements which is not considered substantial, will not be issued if a satisfactory action plan which addresses the requirements identified in this report is submitted to the Commission and is accepted.

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 _____
Second Inspector _____
Locality Manager _____
Date _____

Signature _____
Signature _____
Signature _____

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	3, 4	FS1	The principal officer must ensure that the Statement of Purpose and the Children's Guide are distributed to the placing social work teams. The Children's Guide must be distributed to the children when placed with foster carers via the children's social worker. Evidence must be provided that this is occurring following every placement of a child with foster carers.	31/12/04
2	3, 4	FS8	The principal officer must ensure that each child or young person placed in foster care is carefully matched with carers capable of meeting her/his assessed needs. Where trans racial or trans community placements are made, the fostering service must provide the carers with additional training, support and information to enable the child to be provided with best possible care and to develop a positive understanding of her/his heritage.	31/12/04 & ongoing
3	11/12/13 15/17	FS10	The principal officer must ensure that the foster carers record outcomes of contact arrangements and their perceived impact on the child which must then be fed back to the child's social worker.	31/12/04 & ongoing

4	17	FS21	The principal officer to ensure that foster carers have a clear understanding of the duties and responsibilities of the placement support workers. This includes arrangements for attending reviews in order to support foster carers by the placement support workers.	31/12/04 & ongoing
5	34	FS24	The principal officer to ensure that the foster carers receive training and are provided with the necessary equipment to record significant life events for the foster child, and to encourage the child to make such records, including photograph albums. Carers must also be informed and understand what information they are expected to keep and what information needs to be passed on to the fostering service.	31/12/04 & ongoing
6	44	FS29	The principal officer to ensure that each foster carer receives an allowance and agreed expenses, which cover the full cost of caring for each child or young person. Payments must be made promptly and at the agreed time.	31/12/04 & ongoing

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	Foster carers to provide a mini guide for children in terms of what they offer in the placement. This mini guide could be of assistance to the placing social workers in trying to match a placement and also give a picture of the foster home to the young person prior to introductory visits or placements.
2	FS6	The inspector recommends that placement support workers ensure that the home and immediate environment are free of avoidable hazards that might expose a child to a risk of injury or harm, especially in circumstances where extensive redecoration is being carried out within the foster home. Risk assessments must be carried out to ensure that foster children are safe and that the carers has taken sufficient measures to ensure the work is completed within specific timescales.

3	FS14	The principal officer to ensure that each young person preparing to move to independent or semi independent living is consulted about her/his future and is encouraged to be actively involved in decision making processes and implementation of the pathway plan.
4	FS21	Communication and information sharing between the fostering service and the placing social workers needs to be improved as feedback received from the placing social workers indicated a lack of awareness and clarity about the roles and functions of the placement support workers in the fostering team as well as a lack of awareness and understanding of the National Minimum Standards.
5	FS22	The inspector recommends that the placement support workers ensure that foster carers are encouraged to voice their concerns or issues of dissatisfaction through the foster carers support group and monthly supervisions as well as during consultations with the principal officer.

* 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	10
Survey of placing authorities	YES
Foster carer survey	YES
Foster children survey	YES
Checks with other organisations and Individuals	YES
• Directors of Social services	NO
• Child protection officer	NO
• Specialist advisor (s)	NO
• Local Foster Care Association	YES
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	NO
Observation of foster carer training	YES
Observation of foster panel	NO
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Interview with individual child	YES
Date of Inspection	21/10/04
Time of Inspection	09.30
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	50.00

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?

2

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

A Children's Guide to the fostering service is also provided in a format that can be easily understood by the children placed. The Children's Guide is distributed to the children when placed with foster carers via the children's social workers. The principal officer informed the inspector that copies of the guides have been made available to the children's social workers who are required to hand them to the children when placed in foster care. However, the inspector was informed by the children's social workers that they were not aware of this document and have not handed it to the children.

The NMS (I-J) states that the children must be provided with a children's guide as soon as they are fostered. As well as containing basic information, the Guide contains information on how a child can secure access to an independent advocate. The inspector was pleased to note that a number of children have benefited from support received from the Children's Rights Officer.

In order to meet this standard in full the principal manager must ensure that all children placed with foster carers receive copies of the children's guide.

It is recommended that foster carers provide a mini guide for children, in terms of what they offer in the placement. For example, "this is us", "our family", the kind of accommodation which they can offer, language/s spoken, any pets, general rules of the house or unusual aspects etc, photographs may also be helpful. This mini guide could also be of assistance to the placing social worker in trying to match a placement and also give a picture of the foster home prior to introductory visits or placement.

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

From the pre-inspection questionnaire, the manager's self assessment form, and discussions with her and the staff, the inspector was satisfied that the people involved in managing the fostering service possess the necessary knowledge and experience of child care and possess the skills and experience to operate the service efficiently and effectively.

Ruth Holmes is the principal officer/manager with responsibility for the fostering and adoption service. She is a qualified social worker and holds an equivalent management qualification to NVQ Level 4. Ms. Holmes has work experience in social work child care services since 1974 and has several years of management experience in Children's services. She is the professional advisor for the fostering and adoption panel.

From observation of her attendance at the panel it was evident that she has considerable knowledge of child care law and practice.

The Fostering and Adoption Service is managed directly by three team managers, one manages the service for prospective adopters to approval as well as the fostering & Adoption Development Team, and another manages the service of placement support for approved foster carers. The third is a manager for the administrative team.

The social work team managers hold social work qualifications either Dip. SW/ CQSW and other relevant qualifications. The three team managers deputise for Ruth Holmes in her absence.

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 service operates under the recruitment policies and procedures of the London Borough of Redbridge. From information provided by the principal officer giving details of all staff working for the fostering service, it was clear that they are suitable people to work within the service. Information provided by the principal manager indicated that CRB and POCA checks have been undertaken for all staff working directly with children. This statement was accepted by the inspector.

A full examination of staff records will be undertaken at the next inspection.

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

From viewing records and discussion with the principal officer the inspector was satisfied that there are clear procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of the fostering service and ensuring quality performance.

A clear management structure is in place with lines of accountability and communication. The Principal Officer reports to the Managing Director, Children's Trust. Ultimate responsibility rests with the elected members of the local authority via the Director of Social Services.

Foster carers are allocated to a placement support worker based in the Placement Support Team.

There are clear lines of delegation and all staff have clear job descriptions.

The manager is clear about the requirement to report to the Commission incidents identified as notifiable incidents under Schedule 8, Regulation 43 (1). As noted below the death of a child placed with foster carers, was reported to the CSCI. This was fully investigated by the relevant professionals and there were no untoward circumstances or cause for concern about the care given to the child by the foster carers.

The complaints/allegations made against foster carers have been fully investigated by the Fostering Service Manager, with outcomes recorded.

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

1

Death of a child placed with foster parents.

1

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

0

Serious illness or accident of a child.

0

Outbreak of serious infectious disease at a foster home.

0

Actual or suspected involvement of a child in prostitution.

0

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

0

Serious complaint about a foster parent.

3

Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.

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**

From viewing documentation and discussions with the principal officer and staff the inspector was satisfied that the fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently. The manager has a clear job description setting out duties and responsibilities and does not hold a similar position in another organisation. Management responsibilities are delegated to the team managers in order to ensure continued effective management when the principal officer is absent.

At the time of the inspection, one of the team managers was off on long -term sick leave, however, the principal officer was available to fulfil her role by providing the necessary support and supervision to the social workers in the placement support team. This was confirmed by the staff.

Securing and Promoting Welfare

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 6 (6.1 - 6.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>As part of the inspection of the fostering service, the inspector visited four foster carers at their homes. The inspector noted that all the foster homes were comfortable, warm, adequately furnished and decorated and maintained to a good standard of cleanliness and hygiene. Each foster child placed was provided with her/his own bed and foster carers interviewed were aware of the need for foster children to have privacy and space which was adequately provided.</p> <p>The foster carers confirmed that health and safety issues are discussed during their initial training sessions and were aware of their responsibility to provide a "safe" environment free from avoidable hazards. Where foster carers are expected to provide transport for the child, they confirmed that sufficient safety measures are taken into account for example adequate insurance and MOT as well as the provision of seat belts and special seats for the very young children. The foster carers confirmed that they receive written guidelines on their health and safety responsibilities.</p>		

Standard 7 (7.1 - 7.7)

The fostering service ensures that children and young people, and their families, are provided with foster care services which value diversity and promote equality.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>The children and young people who are looked after by the local authority come from a range of racial, religious and cultural backgrounds, as do some of the foster carers. From information gathered and discussions with foster carers, the inspector was satisfied that the fostering service attempts to ensure that children and young people and their families, are provided with foster care services which value diversity and promote equality. Details of an individual's ethnicity and religion are requested at every stage. The importance of understanding a child's needs is emphasised on training provided to the foster carers and highlighted in the general foster carer agreement as well as during the assessment process. A policy statement about the race, culture, religion and language of children looked after is distributed to all foster carers in the handbook.</p> <p>The foster carers spoken to confirmed that this issue is covered during the induction training.</p> <p>Special provisions are made for children with disabilities or special communication needs for instance, providing special "stair walking" and bathing equipment. The Borough also has an agreement with a voluntary agency (Indigo Project Barnardos) to provide the majority of respite care placements for children with disabilities.</p>		

Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.7)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

During case tracking and discussions with foster carers and staff, it was evident that the aim was to achieve a good match but the reality was often dictated by the need for an urgent placement, the lack of appropriate information from placing or link social workers and limited supply of foster carers. Examples of good practice were available with children being offered introductory visits to proposed foster carers in a planned and structured way. See standard 1 recommending a mini guide of foster carers.

Comprehensive information about children is not always available prior to a placement. Some foster carers cited examples in emergency placements of not receiving even very basic information about a child. It is essential that the manager ensures that comprehensive information is received from the child/young person's social worker prior to the identification of a foster carer or placement. Good matches are only achieved by means of information sharing and consideration involving all relevant professionals, the child/children and his/her family, potential carers and their families and other children in the placement.

It is essential that written foster placement agreements contain specific reference to elements of matching which were taken into consideration when agreeing the placement and identify areas where foster carers need additional support to compensate for any gaps in the match between the child and the foster carer. All other relevant information on health, education, family contact must also be made available to the foster carers.

As stated above the principal officer stated that it is not always possible to match children and foster parents as placements are often made in an emergency situation or there just aren't the number of foster carers available from specific backgrounds to match children with. However where such situations arise, it is paramount that the above issues are clarified immediately and the placement agreements identify how additional and appropriate support will be provided to enable the foster carer to provide care to the young in a culturally sensitive manner.

During case tracking the inspector noted that it is common practice for trans-racial placements to take place for example, the placement of four sikh children with newly registered foster carers from a West Indian background and children from West Indian backgrounds placed with white foster carers.

Evidence was seen on file of a trans-racial/trans cultural placements form being completed when such a placement takes place. From discussions with the foster carers they stated they did not receive any direct information, training or advice from the children's social worker or their placement support worker. The foster carers stated that they seek the necessary advice, guidance and information from people in the community who are from those backgrounds.

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
<p>Through discussion with the foster carers and staff, the inspector was satisfied that training for foster carers is provided during the induction period to foster carers in caring for a child who has been abused, including safe caring skills, managing behaviour and recognising signs of abuse. Safe caring guidelines are provided which the foster carers and children are aware of.</p> <p>Management systems are in place to collate and evaluate information of the number and outcomes of all allegations or abuse of the child/young person in foster care.</p> <p>The service has a clear policy for use if a foster child is missing from home, together with information on bullying and procedures in place to recognise, record and address any instances of bullying.</p> <p>However, the fostering service must ensure that each foster carer is provided with full information about the foster child and his/her family, to enable the foster carer to protect the foster child, their own children and other children for whom they have responsibility and of course themselves.</p>		
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?	2
<p>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 the child's care plan and foster placement agreement. From the files inspected the inspector was satisfied that care plans and placement agreements are in place and are regularly updated which outline contact arrangements for each child in foster care.</p> <p>Clear procedures setting out appropriate contact arrangements for each child are in place. During discussions with foster carers, they confirmed the importance of foster carers helping a child to maintain appropriate contacts which is emphasised during assessment and training sessions. It was evident from discussions with young people that they are encouraged and enabled to maintain contact with their family and friends.</p> <p>Upon case tracking and inspecting records kept by foster carers the inspector noted that only basic records are kept by the carers for example, regarding health appointments and reviews. Following discussions with the foster carers during the visit they agreed and understood why they need to keep more comprehensive records for each foster child. The fostering service manager is required to ensure that the carer records outcomes of contact arrangements and their perceived impact on the child, this information must then be fed to the child's social worker. It was evident from the records kept by the carers that this is not being completed by the foster carers routinely. The inspector was told that a training session relating to this issue was arranged at a future date. However this information must be distributed to all foster carers, even those who do not attend the training session.</p>		

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**

Through discussion with foster carers and young people they confirmed that there are systems in place to seek children's opinions and those of their families and others significant to the child over issues which are likely to affect their daily life and their future.

The fostering service receives feedback from foster carers, the Redbridge Foster Care Association, the Children's Rights Officer and at child care reviews and through the children's social workers. Foster carers spoken to confirmed that they do listen to children and take into account their wishes and feelings regarding their care and treatment and often act on their behalf to ensure they receive fair and efficient treatment in all aspects of care. The fostering service ensures that children in foster care know how to raise any concerns and complaints via the children's guide as well as making available the children's rights officer who has worked with children making representations on their behalf to various parties. An interactive website for children looked after has been commissioned.

A care leaver conference is also organised annually bringing the young people together to reflect on the service provided and how it can be improved.

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**

Each carer is given basic training on health and hygiene issues and first aid with emphasis on health promotion and communicable diseases. The fostering service make clear to the carer their role in terms of helping to promote a child's health, which includes registering a child with a doctor, a dentist when necessary, taking a child to any health appointments, helping a child to access services that they need, giving attention to health issues.

Information is also made available regarding every day care of the child including diet, personal hygiene, and health promotion issues.

The inspector was informed that when a young person is placed on an emergency basis then not all relevant information regarding the child's health is available at the time of placement. However, the service aim to obtain and pass information to the foster carer soon after the placement is made. The fostering manager informed the inspector that the appointment of a health advisor for looked after children to the corporate parenting team and the advent of the children's trust is improving performance and problem solving capacity in this area. For example, a new personal filo-fax for looked after children was launched in June 2004 to promote young people to take an interest in their health and development. Evidence was seen during case tracking of foster carers taking young people to health appointments as well as ensuring access to other health services.

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

A policy statement refers to giving a high priority to meeting the educational needs of each young person in foster care. There is a mechanism whereby attendance at school is monitored.

Through discussion with foster carers, and from case tracking, the inspector was satisfied with the foster carers desire to provide an environment in which education and learning are valued.

The foster placement agreement does identify where financial responsibility lays for all school costs. However, some dissatisfaction with the way the school uniform costs are met was expressed, for example, when a child has grown out of his or her uniform, there was no provision made to purchase school uniform for this young person from a separate school uniform grant but foster carers were expected to pay for this from the child's clothing grant. This issue needs to be further explored and resolved. See requirement number 6.

From case tracking, discussion with foster carers and young people, the inspector was satisfied that young people's educational needs are met sufficiently with foster carers reporting that young people are able to gain places at school quite promptly.

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

There are written requirements of what is expected of foster carers in terms of preparing children and young people for independent or semi-independent living. Future training planned includes "moving children on to permanence". Whilst case tracking, the inspector saw a basic pathway plan for one young person moving on to independent living. However, this did not appear to be comprehensive, nor was there any evidence of consultation taking place with the young person about his/her future and any detailed implementation of the pathway plan.

In the pre inspection questionnaire, the principal officer stated that referrals are made to the specialist team based in the Adolescent Service helping to prepare young people for leaving care and independence. However, there was no evidence to suggest this had been done in the above case.

The inspector recommends that the principal officer ensures that each young person preparing to move to independent living is consulted about his/her future and encouraged to be involved in decision making processes and implementation of the pathway plan.

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 principal officer has stated, in the pre-inspection questionnaire, that the London Borough of Redbridge HR Department operates a thorough recruitment and selection procedure.

Managers have a recruitment and selection guide which shows appropriate procedures, and members of staff can only participate in recruitment and interviewing of staff after they have completed adequate training relating to staff selection.

From discussions with the staff and the principal officer, the inspector noted that the people who work in or for the fostering service are suitable to work with children and young people.

The staff interviewed at the time of inspection, demonstrated a good understanding of foster care. All the fostering social work staff are qualified and have many years of experience in child care work.

In the pre-inspection questionnaire, the principal officer states that she sees all employment references and is chair of the interview panel. Any appointments to a social work position are subject to a verbal reference to confirm the authenticity of the reference prior to starting work. She confirmed that the HR Department check documentation including CRB/ POCA checks and health records prior to confirming staff in post. Hence the inspector did not check staff files held by the London Borough of Redbridge HR Department.

Total number of staff of the agency:

22

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**

From viewing files, policies and procedures and discussion with the principal officer and staff, the inspector was satisfied there is a clear management structure with clear lines of accountability. Staff files viewed showed evidence of regular supervision taking place. The London Borough of Redbridge provide staff with an annual training programme from which they can identify relevant courses they wish to attend. Evidence of staff undertaking ongoing training as part of professional skills development was seen. Staff are also able to access training from external organisations such as BAAF.

Foster carers interviewed also confirmed that ongoing training is offered to them by the local authority. The inspector viewed the foster carer training programme, which is extensive and ensures that carers are able to access the training provided to update their knowledge and skills. Carers maintain a training portfolio.

The inspector was satisfied that there are sufficient administrative procedures in place for dealing promptly with enquiries from prospective carers and any new requests for services.

The inspector observed that adequate administrative back-up, office equipment and infrastructure are in place to support the staff and foster carers to carry out their duties in an efficient and effective manner.

The principal officer confirmed, in the pre-inspection questionnaire, that most foster carer reviews are now up to date, with some outstanding which are scheduled to be completed urgently. A project worker has been appointed to ensure that this process is completed without further delay.

Standard 17 (17.1 - 17.7)

The fostering service has an adequate number of sufficiently experienced and qualified staff and recruits a range of carers to meet the needs of children and young people for whom it aims to provide a service.

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

The inspector was satisfied that the fostering service has a recruitment policy and strategy aimed at recruiting a range of carers to meet the needs of children and young people for whom it aims to provide a service. Where there is a shortfall in this provision, for example for specialist carers, this gap is filled by placing children via independent fostering agencies. Currently 24 young people are placed via independent agencies.

The inspector was satisfied that there is a clearly set out assessment process for carers, which is covered in the BAAF Form F Competency Framework to ensure that all carers are assessed as having appropriate qualities and an aptitude for caring. These assessments are conducted by social workers in the fostering and adoption development team.

There are adequate numbers of experienced and qualified staff with one part time vacancy for a manager. The inspector was pleased to note that an additional senior administrative support officer will also be appointed.

The recruitment of staff and foster carers is an ongoing process and regular information sessions (evening & some daytime) are held for people interested in becoming 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**

The fostering service uses the employment policies and procedures of the London Borough of Redbridge. There are a range of employee support services in place and evidence was seen in staff files which showed that staff receive regular supervision from their team managers who ensure they feel supported and valued by the managers and the borough. Other support services in place include counselling and access to occupational health services. There is a written whistle blowing policy in the staff handbook, on the intranet.

The inspector was pleased to note that, from discussions with foster carers, they stated that they receive sufficient support from the placement support workers who maintain telephone contact as well as visit on a regular basis. A supervisory visit format is in place which is used by the placement support workers during their monthly visits to foster carers, recording their visits and topics of discussion.

Out of hours support for foster carers is provided via a telephone helpline operated on a rota basis between 7 – 11pm each weekday by foster carers (Link Foster Carers). The Link Foster Carers are also involved in a flexi-carers scheme arranging for other foster carers to look after the children in their care, whilst they attend training or take a short break.

There is a comprehensive health and safety policy for carers, children and staff which covers all legal requirements. This forms part of the assessment and ongoing review of foster carers.

Standard 19 (19.1 - 19.7)

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

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

The inspector has been provided with a copy of the training programme for foster carers until April 2005. This indicates that adequate training is available to staff and carers, to enhance individual skills and to keep staff up to date with professional and legal developments.

The administrative team manager confirmed that staff in the administrative team are also offered opportunities to attend relevant qualification courses.

In discussion with two new members of staff recently appointed, the inspector was satisfied that there is now an induction and training programme for the staff to follow.

There is an appraisal system in place which identifies the training and development needs of all staff involved in fostering work. Individual programmes of training for staff are available via supervision. All employees are kept informed of the changes within the legislation or guidance that are relevant to their jobs.

Foster carers are kept similarly informed via regular mailings to them as well as via telephone contact from the chairperson of the Redbridge Foster Care Association.

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)		
All staff are properly accountable and supported.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>From discussions with staff and viewing policies and procedures, it was confirmed that staff receive regular supervision and adequate records are maintained in relation to this. Staff and team meetings are held on a regular basis which are minuted. File audits take place.</p>		

Standard 21 (21.1 - 21.6)		
The fostering service has a clear strategy for working with and supporting carers.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
<p>From discussions with foster carers and staff, from viewing documentation such as training schedules, policies and procedures and from foster carers' files, it was evident that the fostering service has a clear strategy for working with and supporting carers. This includes arrangements for training and development, encouragement for self help groups, supervision and support services, information and advice, assistance in dealing with other relevant services such as health and education, out of hours support, respite care, and arrangements for reviews.</p> <p>Communication and information sharing between the fostering service social workers and children's social workers needs to be improved as feedback received from the placing social workers indicated a lack of awareness and clarity about the roles and functions of the placement support workers in the fostering team. See recommendation 4. Feedback from foster carers was generally positive but varied in terms of their personal experience of support. Feedback received from foster carers indicated that often supervising social workers do not attend the children's reviews which leaves them feeling unsupported. Communication with and support from the children's social workers was often an issue. A number of foster carer annual reviews also remain outstanding but this is being addressed.</p>		

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
<p>From discussions with foster carers, it was evident that the induction and on-going training for foster carers is comprehensive. Enhanced payments are made to foster carers who attend at least three training sessions during the course of a year, in order to encourage them to attend training sessions. This has resulted in greater attendance of foster carers at these sessions. Foster carers confirmed that they find the training valuable and informative. As stated in the previous inspection report, there is a foster carer support group run by an ex foster carer (Redbridge Foster Care Association), which is not very well attended by foster carers but feedback received indicated that the chairperson is very supportive to individuals when requests for advice and assistance are made.</p>		

Foster care agreements are in place to ensure that foster carers have an understanding of what is expected of them and what they should expect from the agency.

Foster carers confirmed that they receive sufficient support from their placement support workers. All foster carers receive a handbook which covers policies, procedures, guidance, legal information and insurance details. This is updated regularly.

Foster carers confirmed that placement support workers meet regularly with them. Evidence was seen on foster carer files of supervisory formats being used to record contact with foster carers. The inspector was informed that the project worker is expected to carry out unannounced visits at least once a year to each foster carer and this process has begun.

Records about allegations of abuse are kept and monitored and a clear policy is in place, which outlines the circumstances in which a carer should be removed from the foster carer register.

Foster carers confirmed that they are aware of procedures for dealing with complaints.

Through discussion it was apparent that some foster carers did not feel “comfortable” enough to raise “issues” about the service with the placement support workers in case they are then viewed as “trouble makers” and that this may result in them not getting further placements. The inspector recommends that the placement support workers ensure that foster carers are encouraged to voice their concerns or issues of dissatisfaction through the foster carers support group and monthly supervisions as well as during consultations with the principal officer.

However through discussion with the principal officer, she stated that there are opportunities for foster carers to air their concerns which are taken seriously and acted upon.

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
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From discussions with foster carers and members of staff, and attendance at the training session as well as receipt of the training programme, the inspector was satisfied that the fostering service ensures that foster carers are trained in the skills that are required to provide high quality care. Training is provided within a framework of equal opportunities and anti discriminatory practice and sessions are arranged at times convenient to foster carers. Foster carers confirmed that pre-approval and induction training is comprehensive and beneficial to them.

An ongoing programme of training and self development for foster carers to develop their skills and tackle any weakness is provided. Appropriate training on safe caring is provided and each carer’s annual review includes an appraisal of training and development needs which is documented in the review report. Foster carers who attend at least three training sessions per year are paid enhancements, in order to encourage them to attend the sessions.

Records

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 24 (24.1 - 24.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
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From viewing files kept by the children's social workers of children/young people, as part of a case tracking exercise, the inspector was satisfied that from the limited sample of files checked, these were up to date and contained comprehensive case records for each child.

The principal officer stated that each foster carer is provided with a diary in which they are required to keep records for each foster child and record relevant information.

During case tracking, and visits to foster carers, although the foster carers were aware of the need to keep records for each child or young person in foster care, they were not all able to produce evidence of the records they keep.

Carers to receive training relating to keeping comprehensive case records for each foster child, and to record significant life events for the child/young person. They should also encourage the young person to make such recordings, including photograph albums.

Carers should have the facilities to store information in a secure manner and understand what information they are expected to keep and what information needs to be passed on to the fostering service.

A training session on record keeping has been arranged by the fostering service.

The principal officer stated that all foster carers have access to a computer and internet connection via computers for looked after children scheme, which has assisted in improving communication between the fostering service and the foster carers.

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
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From case tracking and viewing case records for foster carers, it was evident, from those files examined, that the fostering service administrative records contain all significant information relevant to the running of the foster care service and as required by regulations. The implementation of the computers for looked after children project, improved communication between foster carers and placement support workers via e-mails and implementing quality assurance matters for example, the requirement for team managers to view records during supervision sessions with staff, has led to an improvement in record keeping by the fostering service staff.

This needs to be continually monitored in order to ensure its continuity.

There is a system for keeping records about all allegations and complaints and for handling these confidentially and securely, including details of the investigation, conclusion reached

and action taken.

The principal officer to ensure that all foster carer files are regularly updated by the placement support workers.

Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:	99		
Number of placements made by the agency in the last 12 months:	144		
Number of placements made by the agency which ended in the past 12 months:	159		
Number of new foster carers approved during the last 12 months:	10		
Number of foster carers who left the agency during the last 12 months:	8		
Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £	100	Maximum £	627

Fitness of Premises for use as Fostering Service

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

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

Standard 26 (26.1 - 26.5)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

From observation, the inspector was satisfied that the premises used as offices by the fostering service are suitable for the purpose. There are sufficient administrative systems, including IT and communication systems. Appropriate facilities are provided for secure retention of records and an appropriate security system ensures adequate safety.

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 financial processes and systems are in accordance with the requirements of the London Borough of Redbridge. A new payment system has been introduced which is intended to ensure timely payments are made to foster carers, with the introduction of the (BACS) system. The staff and foster carers stated that although some initial difficulties with the system were experienced, it is now being operated sufficiently well to ensure regular payments are received by foster carers.

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

From discussions with the principal officer, the inspector was satisfied that the financial processes/systems operated by the London Borough of Redbridge Finance Department are properly operated and maintained in accordance with sound and appropriate accounting standards and practice.

Standard 29 (29.1 - 29.2)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

From discussions with foster carers and from viewing relevant documentation, the inspector was satisfied that each foster carer receives an allowance and agreed expenses which cover the full cost of caring for each child or young person.

Generally, foster carers confirmed that payments were made promptly and at the agreed time. Allowances and fees are reviewed annually.

A written policy is available on fostering allowances.

However, some foster carers complained that where children are placed in an emergency and they are required to purchase external items urgently then requests made for payments are not processed at times for up to six months and that they have to constantly chase up the placement support workers before they are reimbursed. A similar was raised about purchase of school uniforms.

The principal officer to ensure that there are sufficient systems in place to ensure prompt payments are made to foster carers in these circumstances.

Fostering Panels

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

From observation of the fostering panel at previous inspection and discussions with the principal officer, it was evident that the fostering panel operates in accordance with the Fostering Services Regulations. The fostering panel has clear written policies and procedures, which are implemented in practice, about the handling of their functions. The fostering panel has access to medical expertise as required.

The inspector is satisfied that the panel provides a quality assurance function in relation to the assessment process, in particular to monitor and review the work of the assessors with a view to ensure that there is consistency of approach of assessment across the service.

The independent members of the panel include expertise in education and in child health. At the time of writing this report, the inspector was informed that at least one independent member of the panel is an approved foster carer.

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 principal officer states that the borough have an agreement with a voluntary agency (Indigo Project, Barnardos) to provide the majority of respite care placements for children with disabilities and that good links have been formed with the Agency and co-ordinated rates of payment have been arranged to ensure the desired outcomes for children with disabilities and their families. The Indigo Project is also registered with the CSCI and subject to inspection.

The arrangements recognise that the parents remain the main carers for the child.

Family and Friends as Carers

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.4)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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A kinship care policy and procedures are in place. The policy states that the fostering service recognises the pre-existing relationships for foster children, when assessing and approving family and friends as foster carers.

Adequate mechanisms are in place for assessing and approving family and friend carers in order to encourage their consideration as carers.

The inspector was informed that family and friend carers are offered the same support and training as the in-house carers. Evidence of support provided to this group of carers to be made available to the inspector at the next annual inspection.

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 in October 2004 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

We are working on the best way to include provider responses in the published report. In the meantime responses received are available on request.

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

Amendments to the report were necessary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments were received from the provider	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provider comments/factual amendments were incorporated into the final inspection report	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provider comments are available on file at the Area Office but have not been incorporated into the final inspection report. The inspector believes the report to be factually accurate	<input type="checkbox"/>

Note:

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

D.2 Please provide the Commission with a written Action Plan by 3/12/04, which indicates how statutory requirements and recommendations are to be addressed and stating a clear timescale for completion. This will be kept on file and made available on request.

Status of the Provider's Action Plan at time of publication of the final inspection report:

Action plan was required	<input type="checkbox"/>
Action plan was received at the point of publication	<input type="checkbox"/>
Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Action plan did not cover all the statutory requirements and required further discussion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provider has declined to provide an action plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: <enter details here>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Public reports

It should be noted that all 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 Ruth Holmes, Principal Officer, Fostering and Adoption Service of the London Borough of Redbridge 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 Ruth Holmes, Principal Officer, Fostering and Adoption Service of the London Borough of Redbridge 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

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