

inspection report

Fostering Services

Foster Care Link

159b Stoke Newington High Street London N16 ONY

9th March 2005

Commission for Social Care Inspection

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

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

The role of CSCI is to:

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

Inspection Methods & Findings

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

The 4-point scale ranges from:

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

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

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

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

FOSTERING SERVICE INFORMATION		
Local Authority Fostering Service?		NO
Name of Authority		
Address		
Address		
Local Authority Manager		Tel No:
Address		Fax No:
		Email Address
Registered Fostering Agency (IFA)		YES
Name of Agency Foster Care Link		Tel No 020 7923 0330
Address 159b Stoke Newington High Street, London, N1	6 0NY	Fax No 020 7923 1754
		Email Address m.zina@btconnect.com
Registered Number of IFA		
G060000251		
Name of Registered Provider Mr Mohamed Munaf Zina Name of Registered Manager (if applicable)		
Date of first registration 27th February 2004	Date of late 27th Februa	est registration certificate ary 2004
Registration Conditions Apply ?	NO	
Date of last inspection	-	

Date of Inspection Visit		9 th March 2005	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		10:00 am	
Name of Inspector	1	Mrs Kristen Judd	073292
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 Representation the time of inspection	ative at	Peter Howes Acting Manager Ismail Amaan- Responsible In	dividual

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 Foster Care Link. 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.

Foster Care Link is an independent fostering service. The agency is based in the Stoke Newington area of the London Borough of Hackney. The Agency was registered by the Commission of Social Care Inspection in February 04 This is the agencies first inspection since registration.

The objective of Foster Care Link is to become the first alternative choice for placing authorities that are finding it difficult to effectively match Muslim, Asian Black and Ethnic Minority children from their own resources. At the time of inspection 7 children were placed by the agency.

The agency offers long, short stay and emergency placements.

PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

Inspector's Summary

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

The inspection took place over 6 day period including visits to the fosters carers and young people . The planning meeting was held in December 04. As a result of this inspection 10 requirements and 7 recommendations were made. These are minor shortfalls, many relating to policies and procedures . The inspector acknowledges that the agency was actively addressing issues as they were raised during the inspection. In addition it is noted that the agency has worked hard towards achieving the standards over the previous months and are clearly focused on exceeding them in the future.

The following methods were used to inspect the agency.

- 1. Planning meeting
- 2. Visit to two carers.
- 3. Visits to four children.
- 4. Observation of Fostering Panel on 12th March05
- 5. Case tracking.
- 6. Discussion with social workers.
- 7. Meeting with the Panel Chair
- 8. Meeting with the Registered Provider
- 9. Discussions with the Acting manager

Statement of Purpose.

Standard 1 was partially met.

The inspector was satisfied that the Statement of Purpose clearly stated the aims and objectives of the service. The guide includes all the information as specified in Regulation 3 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002. The children's guide requires further development to ensure that it is child friendly.

Fitness to Carry on or Manage a fostering Service. Standards 2-3.

1 was fully met and 1 was partially met.

The manager is qualified and experienced in the childcare field and fostering. Although he is still awaiting the return of relevant checks to confirm registration status. Evidence from the inspection show's that the staff are well supported to ensure service delivery is efficient. Random selections of files were inspected and it was noted that necessary documentation was in place in accordance with Schedule 1 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002.

Management of the Fostering Service.

Standards 4-5.

1 was fully met and 1 was partially met.

The inspector was satisfied that the newly appointed manager endeavours to manage

effectively and is aware of the improvements needed. The financial procedures for the service were seen as appropriate during the inspection.

Securing and Promoting Welfare.

Standards 6-14.

2 of the 9 standards were fully met. 7 standard was partially met.

The agency must develop some of the agencies policies further to provide clarity to carers and staff. The agency must investigate and implement ways of ensuring how the children/young people's opinions and views can be sought regularly.

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

1 of the 9 standards was fully met and 8 standards were partially met.

The current assessments are of a reasonable standard however issues were raised to the lack of evaluation of the ability to parent and the applicant's self- reflection with in the assessment. In addition the approval need to be clearly to ensure good matching. The inspector acknowledges that much work has been done in this area and there is a marked difference in the recent assessments.

Records

Standards 24-25.

1 was fully met and 1 was partially met.

The fostering service keeps and updates separate records for staff, carers, young people, and complaints. Records seen were in good order. All records were kept in locked filing cabinets.

Fitness of Premises for use as Fostering Service Standard 26. This standard was met.

Financial Requirements

Standards 27-29 both standards were fully met.

The fostering service was financially viable. Finances are monitored and audited.

Fostering Panel

Standard 30 was met.

The foster panel was observed during the inspection. Panel discussion demonstrated awareness of class, cultural and identity issues. Panel members contributed to the discussion and raised some relevant issues.

Short term Breaks.

Standard 31 was met

At the time of inspection there were no placements in place.

Family and Friends as Carers.

Standard 32. Standard not applicable

The inspector would like to thank the Foster Carer's, children/ young people and the staff team for their co-operation throughout the inspection. Verbal feedback was given at the end of the inspection.

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
satisfies the regulatory requirements.	
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	NO
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:	
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
Willon is not considered substantial.	
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	NO
fostering service:	
The grounds for the above Report or Notice are:	

Implementation of Statutory Requirements from Last Inspection

NA

Requirements from last Inspection visit fully actioned?

If No please list below

STAT	UTORY REQ	UIREMENT	S	
	ompliance wit		addressed from the last inspection report which inc Standards Act 2000 and Fostering Services Regul	
No.	Regulation	Standard	Required actions	
			This is the agencies first inspection.	

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	Kristen Judd		
Second Inspector			
Locality Manager			
Date	18 th April 2005		

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	FS1	The responsible individual must ensure that the children's guides be developed into a child friendly document that is age appropriate in line with Regulation 3 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002.	31/5/05
2	7.2	FS2	The responsible individual must ensure that the acting manager complete the fitness assessment as stated in regulation 7 of the Fostering Service Regulation 2001.	31/5/05
3	28.2(a)	FS8	The responsible individual must ensure that foster carers are approved for appropriate ages of children and young people to ensure that appropriate matching is achieved at all times.	30/4/05
4	12.1	FS9	The responsible individual must develop a comprehensive child protection policy.	31/5/05
5	28.2	FS9	The responsible individual must ensure that comprehensive assessment and training is undertaken with carers prior to approval with regards to children who have been sexually abused.	30/6/05
6	11	FS11	The responsible individual must investigate and implement ways of ensuring how the children/young people's opinions and views can be sought regularly.	31/7/05
7	17	FS12	The responsible individual must ensure that foster carers are provided with first aid training.	30/6/05

			The responsible individual must ensure that a	
8	27.4	FS16	system is in place for the checking of Form F's prior to being presented at panel.	30/4/05
9	27.1	FS17	The responsible individual must ensure that assessments must further evaluate ability to parent and consistently include the applicant's self- reflection.	30/4/05
10	27.2	FS17	The responsible individual must ensure confirmation of category of approval is adequately discussed with prospective carers during assessment.	30/4/05
11	27.1	FS17	The responsible individual must ensure that the initial assessments that contain similarities received a comprehensive review that addresses all pertinent issues.	31/7/05
12	12.1	FS18	The responsible individual must ensure that the whistle blowing policy clarify to indicate that whistle blowing can be made directly to outside agencies directly including social services and the Commission for Social Care Inspection. It must be in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.	31/7/05
13	11	FS18	The responsible individual must clarify who is responsible for insuring the belongings the children /young people placed with foster carers.	31/7/05
14	21.4(a)	FS19	The responsible individual must ensure that staff are fully trained in assessment.	31/7/05
15	21.4(a)	FS19	The responsible individual must ensure that staff received further Child Protection training.	31/7/05
16	42	FS30FS24 FS20	The responsible individual must review the agencies policies and procedures to ensure that the service provision is in line with the agencies statement of purpose.	31/8/05
17	12.2	FS22	The responsible individual must clarify the complaints against carers policy, as it partially complaints and partially allegations of abuse. In addition the agency must ensure that the details of the Commission of Social Care Inspection are correct.	31/7/05
18	12.2	FS22	The responsible individual must ensure that the complaint policy clearly states that complainants can make representation to the Commission at any time, not solely if they are dissatisfied.	31/7/05
19	17.1	FS23FS21	The responsible individual must ensure an on going training and self-development plan for foster carers to develop their skills and tackle any weaknesses.	31/7/05

20	17.2	FS23	The responsible individual must ensure as stated in standard 23.6 appropriate training on safe caring must be provided for all members of the foster household.	31/7/05
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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).

consi	aerea for imp	lementation by the Authority or Registered Person(s).
No.	Refer to Standard *	Recommendation Action
1	FS6	It is recommended that there is a formal method of recording that these works have been completed.
2	FS7	The responsible individual should ensure that the Equal opportunities policy is developed to include valuing diversity and promoting equality for the young people and their families.
3	FS9	It is recommended that the guidance on recognising abuse be included into the carers' handbook.
4	FS9	The missing child policy would benefit from further guidance for the carer with regards to young people to continually abscond, and what to do once the young person returns.
5	FS23	The agency should monitor this to ensure that all training is of a high standard and meeting carers needs.
6	FS24	Training courses for foster carers should be made available that addresses Life history work.
7	FS30	It is recommended that the panel receive further training with regard to the Form F.

^{*} 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

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

Date of Inspection	9/3/05
Time of Inspection	10.00
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	37.15

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)

[&]quot;0" in the "Standard met?" box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion.

[&]quot;9" in the "Standard met?" box denotes standard not applicable.

[&]quot;X" is used where a percentage value or numerical value is not applicable.

Statement of Purpose

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

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

Standard 1 (1.1 - 1.6)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met? | 2

The inspector was satisfied that the Statement of Purpose clearly stated the aims and objectives of the service. The Statement covers all aspects as stated in Standard 1 of the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services.

The children's guide has been produced in two forms; one aimed at younger children and one for young people and carers however the only difference is the size of the typed font used and some of the wording. The guide does include the information as specified in Regulation 3 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002. However the guides are very basic and not deemed child friendly.

It is required that the children's guides be developed into a child friendly document that is age appropriate in line with Regulation 3 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002.

The inspector was informed that the statement of purpose and children guide were to be reviewed in May 05.

Fitness to Carry On or Manage a Fostering Service

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 2 (2.1 - 2.4)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met? 2

At the time of inspection the acting manager is in the process of being registered with the Commission of Social Care Inspection. The acting manager is a qualified social worker with thirty-three years social work experience. He is a professional adviser and has been a chair and trainer of adoption and fostering panels.

During the interview the inspector was satisfied that the manager exercises effective leadership.

The fostering service evidenced that it is managed by appropriately skilled management to effectively and efficiently meet the demands of the service. At the time of inspection the acting manager was actively undergoing the registration procedure.

The acting manager must complete the fitness assessment as stated in regulation 7 of the Fostering Service Regulation 2001.

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 inspector was satisfied through interviewing the manager and additional staff their suitability to manage the service. Random selections of files were inspected and it was noted that necessary documentation was in place in accordance with Schedule 1 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002.

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?

The inspector through interviewing the registered manager was satisfied that he was aware of his role and responsibilities.

The inspector was satisfied at the time of inspection that there are clear roles for both the manager and staff with established lines of communication.

The agency has proper financial procedures in place, the information with regard to charges, amounts paid to foster carers in each age band and details of allowances that are recommended for the young people. This includes information with regard to festival payments, clothing grants and holidays.

The information with regard to charges to the local authorities, are available.

The placing agreement places the responsibility on the foster carer to inform the agency of any practical changes or circumstances that may affect the suitability as a carer.

Number of statutory notifications made to CSCI in last 12 months:		0
Death of a child placed with foster parents.	0	
Referral to Secretary of State of a person working for the service as unsuitable to work with children.	0	
Serious illness or accident of a child.	0	
Outbreak of serious infectious disease at a foster home.	0	
Actual or suspected involvement of a child in prostitution.	0	
Serious incident relating to a foster child involving calling the police to a foster home.	0	
Serious complaint about a foster parent.	0	
Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.	0	
Number of complaints made to CSCI about the agency in the past 12 mont	hs:	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?

2

All employees have been provided with a job description outlining their responsibilities.

The inspector was satisfied that the newly appointed manager endeavours to manage effectively and is aware of the improvements needed. This inspection highlighted numerous requirements, relating to social work practise, which must be addressed to provide a good quality foster care service.

The fostering service must be conducted in a manner that is consistent to their statement of purpose.

In the managers absence a named social worker oversees the day to day running of the agency. However the inspector was informed that the manager is contactable 24 hours a day.

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?

The inspector reviewed in detail five individual foster carer files and interviewed two foster carers in their homes and some young people in placement.

Foster carers homes were found to be clean, comfortable, warm, adequately furnished and decorated. Each child had their own rooms, which reflected their individual personalities. All the young people spoken to during the inspection appeared happy with their accommodation and felt that there was enough privacy to meet their needs.

Within the matching policy it provides guidance with regard to making placements and the accommodation available.

Health and safety is addressed within foster carers training and in the foster carers' handbook. The inspector was satisfied that service endeavours to ensure foster carers' homes are free of avoidable hazards that might expose a child to risk of injury or harm. This includes social worker's checking insurance and MOT's for cars owned by carers. Evidence was seen on all of the foster carers files with regards to health and safely checks being undertaken.

Checklists are used and a letter is sent informing the carers' what works or items are to be purchased. It is recommended that there is a formal method of recording that these works have been completed.

All of the Foster carers spoken to during the inspection contributed positively to the inspection process.

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? | 2

The foster carers' handbook addresses equal opportunities, however it focuses mainly on recruitment of employees. The policy should be further developed to include valuing diversity and promoting equality for the young people and their families.

The agency is not able to provide specialist care and equipment to enable children with disabilities to be accommodated at this time.

The foster Matters course undertaken by all carers units such as:

- Background of children coming into care including the disadvantages they face.
- > The role of the foster carer including promoting interests of the child.
- Promoting and preserving children's identity.

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?

At the time of inspection all of the approved foster carers and young people placed were Muslim. The matching policy covers issues to be considered such as:

- Contact arrangements
- > Siblings.
- Education.
- Race, Culture and Language.
- > Religion.
- Disability.
- Accommodation.

The inspector was satisfied through the evidence seen that all the placements appeared suitably matched to meet the child's gender, race, ethnic origin and language.

The inspector noted that may of the approvals were for 0-18 either gender with a preference noted by the foster carers. The agency must ensure that foster carers are approved for appropriate ages of children and young people to ensure that appropriate matching is achieved at all times.

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? | 2

The following policies and procedures are in place:

- Safe caring guidelines.
- > Absence of Foster children from Carers Home.
- Bullvina
- Control and Sanctions.

The agency has many sub policies that address child protection and allegations however there needs to be a comprehensive child protection policy in place. It is recommended that the guidance on recognising abuse be included into the carers' handbook.

Child Protection training for foster carers is completed initial within the 'choosing to foster' course. Carers interviewed by the inspector confirmed that they had received the Carer's Handbook and were familiar with the Safe caring policies. All of the carers had safe caring guideline in place.

Training is also provided for carers who are looking after children who have been sexually abused. Due to the cultural and religious beliefs it is recognised that discussing sexual abuse is a difficult area for carers to discuss openly. The Form F's seen during the inspection did not highlight that this had been addressed fully. This is an important issue, as often young people placed do not make disclosures until they are settled. The manager must ensure that this issue be assessed comprehensively prior to approval.

The policy with regard to bullying was seen; this is comprehensive and includes indicators of bullying or different types of bullying.

The missing child policy is incorporated in the foster carers' handbook, the policy is basic and informs the carer to inform the supervising social worker and police. The policy would benefit from further guidance for the carer with regards to young people to continually abscond, and what to do once the young person returns.

Foster care agreements and the foster carers handbook clearly highlights that corporal punishment is not acceptable.

There is a system in place to collate information on the circumstances, number and outcome of all allegations of neglect or abuse of a child in foster care. There have been no allegations been made.

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

%

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

There is guidance for carers regarding contact and the role and responsibilities of the carer.

The carers spoken to during the inspection were aware of 'contact' arrangements for the young people in their care. The inspector was satisfied that the carers were aware of their responsibilities with regard to supporting contact visits. One carer was trying to encourage further contact with siblings through the social worker. The young people interviewed had contact arrangements in place.

Transport allowances are incorporated into the weekly payments to carers to ensure family contact. This is up to three times a week. Additional arrangements will be funded by the agency.

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?

Evidence was seen of foster carers and supervising social workers attending reviews. All of the young people interviewed had received a guide but they were not clear of the content. As stated in standard 1 the children's guide is not deemed child friendly.

At the time of inspection none of the carer were due for review. The inspector saw evidence of one case being prepared for review which included questionnaires form the young people being cared for to comment on their satisfaction with the level of care received via foster placements.

The complaints procedure is in the children's guide, although particularly the guide aimed at younger children is not child friendly. All of the young people spoken to stated that they would speak with their social workers if they had a concern.

The inspector was informed that there was a joint carer, children and staff training fun day planned for June 25th. The day it to have guest speakers, an opportunity for consultation and discussion.

However at the time of inspection there had been no opportunity for young people to get together and no on going organisational consultancy with the young people with regards to issues that are likely to affect their daily living or future. The agency must investigate and implement ways of ensuring how the children/young people's opinions and views can be sought regularly.

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?

Health needs were clearly recorded in the Look After Children (LAC) documentation in children's files. The foster carers confirmed that they had received copies of the same, and that the information was sufficient.

The policy on Promoting the Development and Health of Children in Foster Care provides clear guidance with regard to the carer's role in terms of helping to promote the health of any child in their care.

Evidence was seen during the visits undertaken during of carers registering the children with local doctors and dentist. The inspector was satisfied during the visits that carers were fully aware of the health and development needs of the children and young people in their care.

Evidence was seen at all foster carers homes of records being kept of health appointments. One carer retained detailed records of the appointments and the outcomes with details of any medication prescribed. The carer is commended for this recording.

The agency has not provided foster carers with first aid training this must be addressed as a matter of urgency. The inspector was informed that training has been planned for May 2005.

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?

Foster carers visits and files evidenced that carers were aware of their role with regards to

school contact, creating an environment where learning is valued; establishing an expectation of school attendance and supporting the child's full participation in school life.

Evidence was seen in their day-to-day recording and supervision sessions of carers attending educational meetings (parents evenings).

The foster carers' homes that the inspector visited had toys, books and computers.

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? | 2

The Preparing for Adulthood policy highlights the role of the foster carers. It gives the expectation that care will have a proactive approach in ensuring that young people are given the opportunity for learning independence skills.

The policy also states that carers must have mandatory training within two years of approval ' Preparing Young People for Independent Living' course. At the time of inspection none of the carers had undertaken the course.

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 agency has a Equal Opportunities policy in place that covers recruitment and selection of employees. In addition the agency has a recruitment procedure in place. The inspector was satisfied that the procedure was clearly written and followed good practice in safeguarding children.

Review of three staff personnel files evidenced appropriate written references, evidence of relevant qualifications and full employment histories and satisfactory Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) disclosure checks on file. The inspector reviewed the personnel file of all members of the fostering panel that evidenced completed CRB checks.

Total number of staff of the	2	Number of staff who have left the	0
agency:	3	agency in the past 12 months:	U

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?

The management structure attached to the Statement of Purpose has clear lines of accountability. The inspector was satisfied during the inspection that staff were aware of the management structure.

Assessments have been completed in a timely fashion. Reviews have not yet commenced carers are just approaching the first year of approval. There is clear guidance in place for staff with regards to the reviews indicating what action to be taken, by whom.

Evidence was seen during the inspection of supervising social workers liaising with relevant social services departments with regards to the young people in their care.

During the inspection a selection of staff files were seen, these are well maintained in a set format which include supervision records, personal details, qualifications (certificates) records with regards to sickness and annual leave.

Evidence was seen with regards to guidance with the assessment process as the current practise is for the manager to discuss each case that the supervising worker where there

may be concerns. However there is a need for the assessments to be in-depth and address sensitive issues. The manager must ensure that a system is in place for the checking of Form F's prior to being presented at panel. During the inspection it was noted that approvals are generally very wide that is 0-18, one assessment which was being out forward for 0-18 and mother and baby placement. There was no evidence throughout the assessment of the skills that the carer had to support a mother and baby placement. The agency must ensure confirmation of category of approval is adequately discussed with prospective carers during assessment.

The inspector was satisfied that there is adequate administrative back up to ensure the smooth running of the fostering service.

Relevant policies and procedures are in place for staff however as highlighted through this report amendments are required to policies and this has been highlighted against relevant standards.

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?

The recruitment process of carers is clearly identified and carers spoken to felt that the assessment process was a positive experience and stated that they were well supported.

Concerns were raised with regard to the initial Form F's that were approved at panel. Similarities were noted and they did not provide an in-depth assessment of prospective foster carers. The inspector however notes that the Form F taken to panel during the inspection were of a better quality. The agency must ensure that the initial assessments that contain similarities received a comprehensive review that addresses all pertinent issues.

However there is a need for further work particularly is in depth discussions regarding protection, abuse and dealing with challenging behaviour. The current social work staff have limited experience although the inspector acknowledges that there is clearly an improvement in the assessments. The current manager has much experience within this field and is closely supervising the current staff and taking overall responsibility for the assessment and approvals.

Assessments must further evaluate ability to parent and consistently include the applicant's self- reflection.

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?

There is 24-hour support service provided for foster carers by the social workers. In addition the manager is contactable 24 hours a day. Supervising social workers contact carers regularly by telephone in addition to the home monthly visits.

The agency has appropriate policies and procedures although as stated within the report some of the policies require further development and in some cases amendment. There are job descriptions for staff within the agency.

The service has a whistle blowing policy. The policy requires further development as it develops into a complaint policy rather than whistle bowing. It must be amended to indicate that whistle blowing can be made to outside agencies directly including social services and the Commission for Social Care Inspection. It must be in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

Carers spoken to during the inspection felt that they were well supported and that the social workers were approachable at any time.

The foster carers agreement clearly states that fosters carers must in addition have household insurance and inform the insurance company that they are a foster carer. However the inspector raised concern regarding the exception regarding a 'conflict with religious belief'. The agency must clarify the situation with regards to the belongings of foster children and who is responsible for the insurance cover.

Evidence was seen of the insurance liability cover until 26/4/05

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?

Staff had received a basic induction, both of the social workers are undertaking the NVQL4 in Management.

The social workers have not received any fostering training since commencement of the current post. Both are newly qualified with limited fostering experience. However as previously stated the current manager has developed the assessment skills and this is on going.

The inspector was informed that the agency have joined fostering network to access relevant service specific courses. Staff must have a review to identify the training and development needs of staff as a matter of urgency.

As stated throughout this report issues have been raise regarding the quality of the Form F's although it has been acknowledged that there has been much improvement. The agency must ensure that staff are fully trained in assessment.

Through the discussion s with staff there is limited knowledge regarding child protection and

dealing with allegations. The agency must ensure that staff received further Child Protection training.

At the time of inspection joint training between fostering staff and carers was not being held on a regular basis. However as previously stated there is a joint carer, staff and children training fun day planned for June. The agency should consider further ways of addressing the issues for the future.

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)

All staff are properly accountable and supported.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

The fostering agency produced a Handbook for foster carers and staff, which provided comprehensive guidance of relevant practice and procedural matters. However as stated throughout this report there is a need for policies to be amended or further developed.

Individual foster carer files reviewed by inspectors evidenced case supervision and guidance social workers staff who spoke with inspectors indicated that they received monthly (and in some cases, more frequent) 1:1 supervision with the managers. Records of team meetings were also seen as these are used to discuss general and practice issues.

The inspector was informed that staff appraisals would commence in May 05.

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?

Supervising social workers are expected to visit foster placements at intervals of not more than six weeks with at least one unannounced a year. This is to supervise, monitor and offer support to foster carers. The inspectors saw consistent documentation of signed supervisory visits.

All foster carers spoken to during the inspection had named allocated supervising social workers and were generally very complimentary about the staff; in particular the nature and quality of support offered. As previously stated reviews have not yet commenced carers are just approaching the first year of approval.

Although foster carers have undertaken the choosing to foster course and fostering matters there has been limited training. The agency must ensure that arrangements are in place for training and development of foster carers.

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?

The inspector was satisfied that all the carers spoken to during the inspection had a full understanding of the expectation of foster carers approved by the agency. The inspector was satisfied that there are practical systems in place to support foster carers.

All carers had a signed copy of the foster care agreement in line with Schedule 5 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2001.

The Foster Carers' Practice Handbook is easy to reference and has been written in a jargon free way. The Handbook refers to and corresponds with the National Minimum Standards.

Carers indicated they were comfortable with contacting supervising social workers at any time for advice and consultation. This was confirmed through the tracking of cases during the inspection.

Copies of supervision were seen on the foster carers files. Carers spoken to confirmed that visits are also under taken on an unannounced basis. Evidence of this was seen on foster carers files.

The Foster Carers' Handbook contains the complaints procedures were seen at the time of inspection, they clearly stated timescales for responding to complaints .The Foster Carers' Handbook also details the procedures in relation to Complaints against carers policy, this policy requires further clarification as it partially complaints and partly allegations of abuse. In addition the agency must ensure that the correct details of the Commission of Social Care Inspection are correct.

The complaints policy was seen. However, it must be made clear that complainants can make representation to the Commission at any time, not solely if they are dissatisfied.

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?

All prospective carers attend the 'Choosing to Foster' course. Evidence was also seen of carer attending 'Fostering matters' courses. However there has been limited training in Child Protection in addition there has been no First Aid training.

The agency have developed a plan for training over the forthcoming year which covers:

- > First Aid
- Fostering Matters
- Choosing to Foster

In addition the social workers undertaking modular training during 1:1 sessions. The agency should monitor this to ensure that all training is of a high standard and meeting carers needs.

The agency must ensure as stated in standard 23.6 that appropriate training on safe caring

is provided for all members of the foster household.
The agency should ensure an on going training and self-development plan for foster carers to develop their skills and tackle any weaknesses.

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?

The agency has produced a policy on case recording, which establishes the purpose, format and content of files and clarifies relevant information to be kept on foster carers and children's files. The policy states that all events must be typed and signed within seven days of the event and that a supervisor must countersign all entries at least once every three months. At the time of inspection this policy was not being adhered to.

The inspector tracked 5 case files for foster carers and children. Files were generally up to date.

The foster carers confirmed to the inspector that they had copies of placement and care plans for all fostered children. The foster carers kept their own records about the fostered children. Daily recordings were seen during the inspection. During the inspection it was noted that all carers spoken to had the facilities to ensure that all records /information was kept in a secure manner.

Training courses for foster carers should be made available that addresses Life history work.

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 fostering service keeps and updates separate records for staff, carers, young people, and complaints. Relevant policies in relation to file administration are in place.

Confidential records are stored securely at all times and there is a policy on access to records.

Written entries in records were found to be legible, clearly expressed, non-stigmatising and distinguish between fact, opinion and third party information.

Records are kept of checks and references that have been obtained.

Foster carers files contain the following: key information, Form F assessment, approvals/reviews, contact sheets, correspondence, training, finance, checks, allegations/complaints and children. In addition copies of relevant information pertaining to the foster child in placement were located on the foster carers files.

The carer's files were clear and well structured. The inspecto were kept securely at all times.	ors were s	satisfied that all	records
Number of current foster placements supported by the a	gency:		7
Number of placements made by the agency in the last 12 months:			17
Number of placements made by the agency which ended in the past 12 months:			10
Number of new foster carers approved during the last 12 months:			15
Number of foster carers who left the agency during the last 12 months:			0
Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £	185.00	Maximum £	585.00

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 agency has adequate administrative systems, including IT and communication. The premises provide an equipped base for staff to work. Facilities are available for the secure retention of records in a lockable room. There is an appropriate security system and safeguard on the IT system. The premises and its contents are adequately insured.

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?

The agency's financial resources are satisfactory. There is no evidence to suggest that the agency is not able to fulfill its financial obligation.

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

Financial policies and procedures are now in place. The agency provided a three-year plan prior to registration.

The examined files were well organised. The appropriate financial data were kept electronically using a computerised accounts package and were password protected.

The inspector was informed that the charted accountant audits the end of year final accounts.

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

There is a written policy on fostering allowances, detailed in the carer's handbook.

Allowances are determined on a separate document. The agency evidenced that a payment system is in operation. Payments are made promptly by cheque, on the last day of the month. All the foster carers spoken to during the inspection confirmed this.

The monitoring visits/ review format states that supervising social workers must evidence the documentation recorded by the carers with regard to the allowances made for the young people.

Fostering Panels

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

The fostering panel was observed to be properly constituted and had clear written procedures detailing membership. The policy must be further developed to address standard 30.2 re decision-making when all of the panel members of the panel are not in agreement. The fostering panel has an independent chair is an experienced social worker who has worked to Team Manager and Service Manger level in Local Authorities. Panel membership included a cross section of expertise and independent members.

Panel discussion demonstrated awareness of class, cultural and identity issues. Panel members contributed to the discussion and raised some relevant issues.

As previously highlighted through out this report there remains issues regarding the assessments to further evaluate ability to parent and consistently include the applicant's selfreflection. The inspector was not satisfied that panel addressed all the pertinent issues for example one assessment which was being out forward for 0-18 and mother and baby placement. No panel member addressed the lack of information within the Form F or questioned whether the approval category was appropriate.

The chair highlighted that the panel is fairly new and is being developed, much work has been dome and some training has been undertaken. It is recommended that the panel receive further training with regard to the Form F.

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? | 3

Short-term breaks are provided for children in need whose families require additional social work involvement No single placement exceeds four continuous weeks and the total duration of placements in the twelve-month period does not exceed one hundred and twenty days. Policies and procedures are in place in relation to the provision of short breaks services.

At the time of inspection there were no placements in place.

raining 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 there is recognition of the particular relationship and particular.		•	
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	9	
Not applicable			

PART C	LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY	
	(where applicable)	
Lay Assessor	Signature	
Date		

PART D

PROVIDER'S RESPONSE

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

We would welcome comments on the content of this report relating to the Inspection conducted on 9th March 2005 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible			

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

Amendments to the report were necessary	NO
Comments were received from the provider	YES
Provider comments/factual amendments were incorporated into the final inspection report	NO
Provider comments are available on file at the Area Office but have not been incorporated into the final inspection report. The inspector believes the report to be factually accurate	YES

Note:

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

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

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

Action plan was required	YES
	\/50
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=""></enter>	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.

Registered Person's or responsible Local Authority Manager's statement of agreement/comments: Please complete the relevant section that applies. D.3.1 I confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above date(s) and that I agree with the statutory requirements made and will seek to comply with these. **Print Name** Signature Designation **Date** Or D.3.2 I of am unable to confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above date(s) for the following reasons:

D.3

PROVIDER'S AGREEMENT

Print Name

Signature

Date

Designation

Note: In instance where there is a profound difference of view between the Inspector and the Registered Provider both views will be reported. Please attach any extra pages, as applicable.

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