



Champions for
Social Care
Improvement

inspection report

Fostering Services

**Kingston upon Hull City Council
Fostering Service**

Social Services

Gleneagles Centre

East Carr Road

Kingston upon Hull

East Yorkshire

HU8 9LB

13th October 2003

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

Kingston upon Hull City Council

Address

Brunswick House, Strand Close, Beverley Road, Kingston upon Hull. HU2 9DB

Local Authority Manager

Heather Clare

Tel No:

01482 798653

Address

Social Services, Gleneagles Centre, East Carr Road, Kingston upon Hull, East Yorkshire, HU8 9LB

Fax No:

01482 712438

Email Address

Heather.Clare@hullcc.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

N/A

Date of latest registration certificate

Registration Conditions Apply?

NO

Date of last inspection

10/03/03

Date of Inspection Visit		13th October 2003	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		09:00 am	
Name of Inspector	1	Jayne Tilley	106300
Name of Inspector	2	Sarah Walker	
Name of Inspector	3	Diane Wilkinson	
Name of Inspector	4	Janet Lamb	
Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable) Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the NCSC. 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		Heather Clare	

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

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**

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Part D: Provider's Response

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INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

Independent and local authority fostering services which fall within the jurisdiction of the National Care Standards Commission (NCSC) 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 NCSC in respect of Kingston upon Hull City Council 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 NCSC 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 Kingston upon Hull City Council, Social Services Department has a dedicated fostering service. Figures available for September 2003 indicate that 326 foster care households were providing foster care support for 486 children, approximately 69% of the looked after children population.

The main offices of the fostering service are located in the east and west of the city of Hull. However, a range of venues are utilised to facilitate local support groups and training for foster carers.

The stated purpose of the service is to provide care for children and young people who are looked after by the local authority and whose needs are best met in a family environment. In order to achieve this stated purpose, staff of the fostering service are involved in the recruitment, training and assessment of prospective foster carers and provide post approval support, training and development. They are also involved in the placement decision process of endeavouring to ensure that each child or young person placed in foster care is matched with a carer capable of meeting his/her assessed needs.

Foster care is provided via a number of distinct fostering schemes, including sibling group carers, family network carers, adolescent and long-term scheme carers, short break (family support) carers, respite carers and mainstream carers. The fostering service also has a service level agreement with Barnardos who provide a specialist service offering short breaks and long term care to children and young people with disabilities.

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.)

In addition to the inspection work undertaken within the fostering service itself, information was sought from young people placed by the fostering service, foster carers, placing officers, family members and specialist advisors to the fostering service.

41(14%) foster carer questionnaires were returned. Foster carer's views were also sought through visits to six foster carer households and through contact at a meeting at the NCSC office. This latter meeting was aimed at meeting representatives of the support groups for foster carers. Unfortunately, although very informative, attendance was too low to constitute a fair representation of foster carers' views.

Placing officers views were sought through a questionnaire, of which 79% were returned. A questionnaire was used to gather views from young people aged 10+. 32 (13%) of these were returned. In addition, the views of young people were sought during the inspection visits to foster carer households. Permission was sought to speak with birth families of those young people who were fostered in the households selected for visiting. Two family members responded positively, although contact was subsequently only possible with one of these.

Interviews were undertaken with five specialist advisors to the fostering service and included representatives from health, education, children's rights service and the independent support service available to foster carers.

A summary of information gathered through the questionnaire surveys is attached as an addendum to this report.

Statement of Purpose (Standard 1)

Major shortfalls were noted within this standard.

A statement of purpose has been developed but needs to be more comprehensive in order to ensure compliance with the Fostering Services Regulations and associated national minimum standards. A children's guide for children aged 12+ requires development. Evidence of approval, review and effective distribution of the statement of purpose is required. Once completed the children's guide must also be kept under review and must be distributed in accordance with the regulations. The statement of purpose informs the policies and procedures of the service and the practice undertaken by those working for the fostering service. It is therefore imperative that matters pertaining to the statement of purpose are expediently completed.

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

Standard 2 is met with minor shortfalls noted in standard 3 with regard to recruitment and selection.

Those involved in managing the fostering service have the necessary management skills,

knowledge and experience of childcare and fostering.

Evidence of progress made with regard to recruitment and selection regulations was available. However, additional information is required to ensure full compliance with the requirements of Schedule 1 of the Fostering Services Regulations.

Management of the Fostering Service (Standards 4-5)

Both of these standards are satisfactorily met.

Clear procedures are in place for monitoring and controlling the activities of the fostering service and ensuring quality performance. Ongoing development, to improve the systems and procedures available is a consistent feature of practice within the fostering service. The development of a procedure for notifications to be made to the NCSC and other noted services would be beneficial and is currently being considered by the fostering service. Clear lines of delegation are available within the management structure of the service, although greater clarification of matters pertaining to budgetary control would be beneficial.

Securing and Promoting Welfare (Standards 6-14)

Standards 13 & 14 are satisfactorily met, with major shortfalls noted in standards 8 & 9 and minor shortfalls noted in the remaining five standards.

A thorough approach to pre-approval assessment operates within the fostering service. Information relating to valuing diversity and promoting equality are covered via pre-approval assessment. However, there is little evidence of such matters being revisited post approval. Whilst difficulties regarding the availability of foster placements, and hence associated issues relating to matching, are acknowledged, ongoing development is required to ensure that the placement procedures and practices of the fostering service are compliant with regulations. A fostering placement agreement has been developed and will assist with clarifying the expectations of and tasks associated with foster care.

Generally systems are in place and implemented effectively with regard to protecting young people in foster care. Of significant concern is the ongoing lack of behaviour management training available to fostering staff and foster carers. Procedures relating to safe caring guidelines and the monitoring and evaluation of bullying related incidents also require development. The inspection noted that a positive range of consultation opportunities is available to young people. However, opportunities for ongoing development are noted specifically with regard to children's rights services and their involvement with young people in foster care.

A consistent theme requiring ongoing monitoring by the fostering service is the existence of communication difficulties between fostering staff and childcare social workers. It is to be hoped that the closer working relationship being developed between these two services will assist in improved communication.

Matters pertaining to the education of young people in foster care and leaving care services have seen significant developments and are positive examples of services provided by the fostering team and of inter-agency working.

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

(Standards 15-23)

Standards 17 & 20 are met, with major shortfalls noted in standards 19, 22 & 23 and minor shortfalls noted in the remaining four standards. Positive evidence of staff recruitment was available for inspection. However, with regard to existing and newly recruited staff, further action is required to ensure that recruitment and selection records are compliant with Schedule 1 of the Fostering Services Regulations. Staff are generally organised and managed in a manner that delivers an effective and efficient service. Structures are in place regarding assessments, approvals and reviews of carers. Greater attention is required to ensuring that annual reviews are undertaken within the required 12 months timescale.

Systems for staff and carer support are well developed but also require close monitoring to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements. A significant gap with regard to support is the distinct lack of training available to both staff and carers. This requires expedient development. Many of the required systems and procedures have been developed and now require implementation. Examples of this are the foster care agreement and the whistle blowing policy. The provision of an independent support service for foster carers is acknowledged to be an ongoing positive development within the fostering service. Records of complaints and allegations of abuse are maintained but would benefit from evidence of evaluation with regard to informing the future provision of the fostering service.

Records (Standards 24-25)

Minor shortfalls were noted in both of these standards.

Positive practice is noted with regard to the management and retention of information within the fostering service. Children's records are held within childcare teams. Those files inspected were of a high quality with regard to information held and the use of comprehensive file audits to ensure ongoing quality and quantity of information. Ongoing development is required with regard to agency placements and ensuring compliance with regulation 40. Recommendations regarding achieving best practice are noted in respect to access to files and safe storage.

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

This standard is met.

The premises used as offices by the fostering service are suitable for the purpose. Implementation of Information technology resources, for use by staff, would be beneficial.

Financial Requirements (Standards 27-29)

These standards are not applicable to the inspection of Local Authority fostering services.

Fostering Panels (Standard 30)

Minor shortfalls are noted within this standard.

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. Shortfalls are noted with regard to panel membership and practice with regard to foster carers who wish to voluntarily cease fostering. Greater clarity of the roles and functions of foster panel members and how the suitability of panel members is determined would be beneficial.

Short-term Breaks (Standard 31)

Minor shortfalls are noted with regard to this standard.

Two distinct short break services are operated by the fostering service. The service for children with disabilities is operated by Barnardos and via a service level agreement with the local authority. This agreement is currently undergoing review to ensure compliance with the requirements of regulation 40. The short break (family support) is a more recent development with the fostering services provided by the local authority. Inspection activity undertaken with regard to the short break scheme indicated positive practice with regard to support to carers, the centrality of birth parents' roles and clear guidelines for practice should the placements develop outside of the short-term break remit.

Family and Friends as Carers (Standard 32)

Major shortfalls were noted with regard to this standard.

Whilst local authority services for assessing and approving family and friend carers are designed in a way that encourages their consideration as carers, there are significant gaps with regard to post approval support, training and review of these carers. This is recognised by the Local Authority and current recruitment within the fostering service represents an increase in the level of services to be provided for family network carers. It is hoped that this will address the significant imbalance with regard to the support and training provided to family network carers as compared to that received by mainstream 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:

Matters pertaining to the Section 47(5) notice to the Local Authority and Secretary of State remain subject to further consideration. The Local Authority will be advised of action to be taken by the NCSC in due course.

Implementation of Statutory Requirements from Last Inspection

Requirements from last Inspection visit fully actioned?

NO

If No please list below

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS				
Identified below are areas not addressed from the last inspection report which indicate a non-compliance with the Care Standards Act 2000 and Fostering Services Regulations 2002.				
No.	Regulation	Standard	Required actions	
1	3	FS1	A Statement of Purpose which defines the services and facilities provided by the fostering service, must be completed	8 th March 2004
2	3	FS1	A children's guide, which is relevant to their age, must be available for all fostered children,	8th March 2004
3	5 & 7	FS3	Information held on staff personnel files, with regard to recruitment, must meet the requirements of Schedule 1.	8 th March 2004
4	15	FS7	Specialist services for children with disabilities must be provided with the required aids, adaptations and equipment.	5 th April 2004
5	17	FS7	The fostering service must ensure that fostering service staff and children's social workers work co-operatively and in the best interests of children placed in foster care.	Ongoing
6	34	FS8	The local authority must ensure that children placed in foster care are carefully matched with a carer who can meet their needs.	8 th March 2004
7	17	FS10	Guidance must be available for foster carers on the completion of records relating to contact.	8 th March 2004
8	18(1) (footnote a)	FS11	It must be ensured that the complaints procedure is accessible to children of differing needs and levels of understanding	8 th March 2004

9	17	FS16	Foster Carers must maintain a portfolio of training.	8 th March 2004
10	40	FS16	All aspects of agency placements, as required by Regulation 40, must be developed and adhered to.	8 th March 2004
11	17 & 21	FS18	The Provider must ensure that the Whistle Blowing policy is made available and clearly communicated to foster carers and staff.	8 th March 2004
12	17	FS21	The fostering service must develop a clear strategy for working with and supporting carers that fulfils all aspects of Standard 21.2.	8 th March 2004
13	17 & 34	FS29	Foster carers must receive clear information about the allowances and expenses payable and how to access them prior to a child being placed.	8 th March 2004
14	17	FS32	The support and training needs for family and friends carers must be assessed and met in the same way as for any other carers.	8 th March 2004

Action is being taken by the National Care Standards Commission 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	
N/A		
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Lead Inspector Jayne Tilley **Signature** _____
Second Inspector _____ **Signature** _____
Locality Manager John Irish **Signature** _____
Date _____

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS IDENTIFIED DURING THIS INSPECTION

Action Plan: The appropriate Officer of the Local Authority or the Registered Person (as applicable) is requested to provide the Commission with an Action Plan, which indicates how requirements and recommendations 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(2)(d)	FS1	The procedure for ensuring that the statement of purpose is made available, on request, to parents of children placed in foster care must be reviewed and implemented in practice.	3 rd May 2004
2	4	FS1	A clear process for the review of the statement of purpose and the children's guide must be developed. Any revision must be notified to the Commission within 28 days.	3 rd May 2004
3	4(c)	FS1	If the children's guide is revised, a copy must be supplied to each foster parent and, subject to his age and understanding, to each child placed in foster care. This system requires development.	3 rd May 2004
4	12	FS6	Any assessment carried out in line with Standard 6.5 must be recorded in writing.	8 th March 2004
5	17	FS7	Training plans must reflect that Foster carers are provided with training as outlined within NMS 7.	3 rd May 2004
6	17	FS7	Information provided to foster carers must clearly identify the expectations of the fostering service with regard to ensuring that foster carers give each child encouragement and equal access to opportunities to develop and pursue his/her talents, interest and hobbies.	3 rd May 2004

7	34(3)	FS8	The Provider must ensure that Foster Placement Agreements are completed, meet the requirements of Schedule 6 and contain specific reference to elements of matching.	3 rd May 2004
8	17	FS8	The Provider must ensure that information regarding the process and purpose of introductions is provided to carers.	3 rd May 2004
9	34 & 38	FS8	Systems must be developed to ensure that the requirements for placements as determined by regulations 34 & 38 are met.	3 rd May 2004
10	12 & Sec 22 (CA 1989)	FS9	Safe caring guidelines, as detailed by Standard 9, must be implemented.	3 rd May 2004
11	17 & 21	FS9	Training plans must reflect that staff and foster carers will be provided with training which covers all areas as identified by NMS 9.2	3 rd May 2004
12	17 & 21	FS9	Provision must be made for Therapeutic Crisis Intervention training to be provided for foster carers and fostering staff.	8 th March 2004
13	13	FS9	Consistent information, regarding the fostering services 'no restraints' policy must be provided to carers.	8 th March 2004
14	15	FS12	Foster carers must be given appropriate information regarding the state of health/health needs of any young person placed or to be placed with them	5 th April 2004
'15	17	FS12	Training plans must reflect that training, as identified within NMS 12.5, is provided to each carer approved by the fostering service.	3 rd May 2004
16	20	FS15	In respect of the specialist advisors working for the fostering service, the requirements of Standard 15.7 must be adhered to.	5 th April 2004
17	20	FS15	With regard to staff recruitment, the requirements of schedule 1 must be adhered to.	5 th March 2004
18	21	FS16	All permanent appointments must be subject to a satisfactory completion of a period of probation.	3 rd May 2004

19	19	FS17	Fostering social workers and staff undertaking foster carer assessments must be appropriately qualified or be in the course of obtaining a suitable professional qualification.	3 rd May 2004
20	21(4)	FS19	Training plans must reflect that staff receive appropriate training and appraisal and are enabled, from time to time to obtain further qualifications appropriate to the work they perform.	3 rd May 2004
21	17 & 21	FS19	Training plans must reflect that joint training between fostering services staff and foster carers is held on a regular basis.	3 rd May 2004
22	29	FS21	Systems must be in place and implemented in practice to ensure that foster carers' reviews of approval are undertaken not more than a year after approval and thereafter at intervals of not more than a year.	3 rd May 2004
23	28 (5)(b)	FS22	The Provider must ensure that the foster care agreement meets the requirements of Schedule 5 of the Fostering Service's Regulations 2002	8 th March 2004
24	19	FS22	The role of unqualified staff must be reviewed in line with NMS 22.3	8 th March 2004
25	17	FS22	Upon approval, foster carers must be given a handbook that covers the policies and procedures of the fostering service as well as information regarding legal information and insurance details.	3 rd May 2004
26	17	FS22	The fostering service must provide regular supervision to foster carers.	8 th March 2004
27	17	FS23	Evidence of a comprehensive carers' training programme that incorporates all the elements of training as identified within the national minimum standards must be provided and implemented in practice.	3 rd May 2004
28	17	FS24	Foster carers must be overtly made aware of their role with regard to encouraging a child to reflect on his/her history and to keep appropriate memorabilia.	3 rd May 2004

29	22	FS24	A record of all accidents occurring to children whilst placed with foster carers must be developed and maintained.	3 rd May 2004
30	22	FS25	A record, in respect of each person working for the fostering service, must be maintained in line with the requirements of schedule 2	8 th March 2004
31	24	FS30	Panel membership must include at least one elected member of the local authority.	8 th March 2004
32	29(11)	FS30	The procedure for foster carers who wish to voluntarily terminate their approval must be reviewed and implemented in practice in line with Regulation 29 (11).	5 th April 2004
33	40	FS31	The service level agreement with the Barnardos Fostering scheme must ensure that all matters as outlined within regulation 40 are addressed and implemented in practice. A copy of the service level agreement must be provided to the NCSC for inspection.	5 th April 2004
34	30	FS32	Systems must be developed to ensure that case records for family network carers meet the requirements of regulation 30.	3 rd May 2004
35	31(3)		Each local authority shall enter, in its register of placements, information pertaining to placements made under regulation 38(2), including the date of each agreement entered into in accordance with regulation 38(2) and the terms of any such agreement for the time being in force.	3 rd May 2004

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	Elected members should formally approve the statement of purpose.
2	FS3	For staff appointed prior to April 1 st 2002, it would be beneficial to clarify the manner in which staff have been deemed 'fit' in line with regulations 5, 7 & 20.
3	FS4	It would be good practice for the local authority to inform NCSC of any notifications identified in Schedule 8.
4	FS4	Monitoring of matters pertaining to medications, medical treatment and first aid, as identified within schedule 7, would enhance the area of good practice with regard to monitoring and controlling the activities of the fostering service.
5	FS5	Matters pertaining to budgetary control, between the strategic and operational managers of the service, would benefit from greater clarification.
6	FS7	The establishment and effective implementation of a practice protocol with regard to fostering social workers attendance at childcare reviews would be beneficial.
7	FS9	A system to ensure the evaluation of information pertaining to allegations of neglect or abuse in foster care should be developed.
8	FS9	The development of procedures to recognise, record and address any instances of bullying and to help foster carers cope with it would be beneficial.
9	FS11	Consideration should be given to including Children's Rights presentations in pre-approval training.
10	FS12	The provision of information, as identified by NMS 12.6, within a handbook for carers would provide greater clarity and consistency of information to foster carers.
11	FS13	The foster placement agreement would benefit from greater clarification with regard to who pays for school trips or when additional funds should be requested.

12	FS14	Service provision could be enhanced with regard to foster carers providing all children in their care with age and developmentally appropriate opportunities for learning independence skills.
13	FS18	Greater consistency with regard to the provision of out of office hours support would be beneficial.
14	FS18	A clear and comprehensive health and safety policy should be made available to children who are fostered and greater clarification is required regarding the process by which carers are familiarised with their responsibilities under this policy/procedure.
15	FS19	The effectiveness of the staff induction process would benefit from review.
16	FS20	The process for supervision recording would benefit from review.
17	FS21	Greater clarity of information with regard to mental health services available to children and young people and related support services for foster carers would be beneficial for foster carers and fostering social workers.
18	FS22	The system for ensuring that both carers are seen during supervision sessions would benefit from review.
19	FS22	A system to ensure the evaluation of information pertaining to complaints and representation should be developed.
20	FS22	A clear policy framework, which outlines the circumstances in which carers should be removed from the foster carer register, should be developed.
21	FS24	A written policy with regard to case recording is available but this would benefit from greater clarity with regard to the specific requirements of recording undertaken by foster carers.
22	FS25	The process, by which foster carers are encouraged to access their files and to make additions, comments or record personal statements, including any dissent, would benefit from review and implementation.
23	FS25	Given the sensitivity and requirements for retention of information stored, consideration should be given to the provision of improved fireproof storage for records.
24	FS25	File audits should be reinstated at the earliest opportunity.
25	FS26	Provision of adequate IT equipment for fostering staff would be beneficial.
26	FS29	Resolution should be sought to the current confusion regarding the planned 'Payment for Skills' scheme.

27	FS30	Service specific policies and procedures regarding the functions and decision-making responsibilities of the panel should be developed. These should include the procedure for decision making when all panel members are not in agreement.
28	FS30	Written guidelines should be provided which determine matters pertaining to the suitability of panel members.
29	FS30	Panel membership would benefit from the inclusion of a person who has at any time been placed with foster carers or whose child has at any time been placed with foster carers.

PART B**INSPECTION METHODS & FINDINGS**

The following inspection methods have been used in the production of this report

Number of Inspector days spent	22.5
Survey of placing authorities	YES
Foster carer survey	YES
Foster children survey	YES
Checks with other organisations and Individuals	YES
• Directors of Social services	YES
• Child protection officer	YES
• Specialist advisor (s)	YES
• Local Foster Care Association	NO
Tracking Individual welfare arrangements	YES
• Interview with children	YES
• Interview with foster carers	YES
• Interview with agency staff	YES
• Contact with parents	YES
• Contact with supervising social workers	YES
• Examination of files	YES
Individual interview with manager	YES
Information from provider	YES
Individual interviews with key staff	YES
Group discussion with staff	NO
Interview with panel chair	YES
Observation of foster carer training	NO
Observation of foster panel	YES
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Interview with individual child	NO
Date of Inspection	13/10/03
Time of Inspection	09.30
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	169

The following pages summarise the key findings and evidence from this inspection, together with the NCSC 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?	1
<p>A statement of purpose has been completed. Whilst this contains information regarding the facilities and services provided, additional information and action is required in order to ensure compliance with the Fostering Services Regulations 2002 and associated national minimum standards. The statement of purpose lacks any information regarding the short break service and information with regard to the management and staffing structure of the service must be updated. The provider must ensure that all information as identified within standard 1.4 is included within the statement of purpose. Formal approval of the statement of purpose, by elected members of the Local Authority, is recommended. The statement of purpose is made available to all staff and foster carers within the service. However, in line with regulation 3 (2)(d), the statement of purpose should also be made available, upon request, to parents of children placed in foster care. This area of practice requires development.</p> <p>A children's guide is available for children aged 4-12. Whilst this broadly outlines information regarding the fostering service, the inspection team was advised that the process of developing the statement of purpose into a 'child friendly' document remains an ongoing task. The inspection team was informed that the provision of a guide for older children is also being developed.</p> <p>Given the fluctuating nature of fostering services, for example with regard to numbers of foster carers and children placed, it is important that a clear process for review of the statement of purpose is identified. Any revision of the statement of purpose or the children's guide must be notified to the NCSC (National Care Standards Commission) within 28 days.</p>		

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?
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	3
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The fostering service is operated by the local authority, which has clear lines of delegation with regard to the management of financial and business issues. Those involved with the management of the fostering service have significant experience in the field of fostering and/or childcare work and, where required, evidence of relevant management qualifications was provided.

The staff team has a wide range of skills and knowledge available and whilst there has been some movement of staff members recently, proactive action has been taken to ensure that the developmental needs of the service have been reviewed and steps taken to ensure satisfactory recruitment to any vacant posts.

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?
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	2
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Evidence of recruitment was inspected with regard to two managers of the fostering service. Although CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) checks have been undertaken for all existing staff members, evidence of this check and its outcome was not available on one of the files. In addition, proof of identity, including a recent photograph must be available, along with documentary evidence of relevant qualifications. Evidence of two written references was also not available on one of the files inspected. Whilst it is acknowledged that this gap relates to a recruitment process that was undertaken some years previously, it is important that a clear process should be established to evidence that existing staff are deemed 'fit' in line with Regulations 5 & 7. Current recruitment practices inspected indicated that written references are consistently obtained and were available for 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

For Local Authority fostering services, it is not a regulatory requirement to make notifications of events, as identified within Schedule 8 of the Fostering Services Regulations. However, discussions during the course of the inspection have identified this as an area of good practice and the fostering service management team is considering the process by which the required notifications will be made to the NCSC.

Within the fostering service itself, a range of information and meetings are available with regard to monitoring and controlling the activities of the fostering service. Clear roles for managers and staff are available and issues of communication and accountability are well established. In response to the previous inspection, information with regard to conflicts of interest is now maintained within the fostering service.

The Local Authority Social Services Department operates the fostering service. As such, financial procedures are centrally determined with clear lines of accountability and delegation for the management and review of financial matters.

Systems are in place to seek the views of foster carers and placing social workers with regard to monitoring the quality of foster care provided by the service. The inspector was informed that this process is being extended to ensure that the views of children in foster care are sought via the annual reviews of foster carers.

For Local Authority fostering services, it is not a regulatory requirement to ensure that the matters set out in Schedule 7 are monitored at appropriate intervals. However, discussion with the management of the service and evidence seen indicated that many of the monitoring requirements are already a consistent feature of practice within the service. Further attention to monitoring matters pertaining to medications, medical treatment and first aid administered to children in foster care would enhance this area of established good practice. The lack of monitoring with regard to medication was specifically raised with inspectors by some foster carers.

Number of statutory notifications made to NCSC 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.

2

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.

12

Serious complaint about a foster parent.

6

Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.

7

Number of complaints made to NCSC 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**

The management structure of the fostering service is set out within the statement of purpose. However, as noted previously, this requires updating and the inclusion of information pertaining to the short break service. The post of senior social worker is a recent addition to this management structure. Two senior social workers have been appointed and are directly accountable to the fostering managers. Clear arrangements are in place to identify the person in charge when the manager is absent. Job descriptions are available and were seen during the inspection of staff personnel records.

The level of delegation and responsibility between the strategic and operational managers is generally well defined. Information received during the inspection indicated that matters pertaining to budgetary control, between these two tiers of management, would benefit from greater clarification.

Securing and Promoting Welfare

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 6 (6.1 - 6.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

Accommodation provided by foster carers is assessed during the pre-approval process and subsequently monitored through regular supervision between foster carers and their fostering social worker and through the process of annual reviews.

The inspector was informed that as part of the pre-approval assessment a comprehensive health and safety check of the carer's home and immediate environment is undertaken. Evidence of this was seen on foster carers' files. This includes checks regarding the provision of safe and appropriate transport by potential carers. Information regarding health and safety matters is also included in pre-approval training for carers and within the handbook provided to carers, post approval.

The fostering service must ensure that any assessment carried out in line with standard 6.5, is recorded in writing.

All foster carers were informed of the NCSC inspection and those foster carer households visited were aware that they would be visited and interviewed as part of the inspection process. The inspector was informed that it is the intention of the fostering service, via the recently re-launched fostering support groups, to ensure that foster carers have a greater understanding of the NCSC 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

Pre-approval training is provided to carers and discussions with staff indicate a positive and pro-active approach to ensuring that training with regard to valuing diversity and promoting equality is linked to local issues as well as exploring more general themes. However, in order to ensure that the services' policies and procedures are understood and to assist their assimilation into the everyday practice, those responsible for the fostering service must ensure that carers and staff undertake regular and effective training. Information provided regarding post-approval training for carers does not indicate any further courses are available to carers with regard to 'difference and diversity.'

The Local Authority has a service level agreement with Barnardos with regard to the provision of fostering services for children with a disability. The provision of appropriate aids and adaptations remains an ongoing issue and is currently being addressed via the review of the existing service level agreement.

Whilst there is some evidence of cooperative working with social workers, the inspection team remains concerned that fostering social workers reported that they are not routinely informed of or invited to the statutory reviews of children and young people in foster care. Some foster carers identified this as a significant gap with regards to support.

The establishment of a good practice protocol to address this gap in service provision and

support to foster carers would be beneficial.
 Ensuring that foster carers give each child in their care equal access to opportunities to develop and pursue interest/hobbies/talents is monitored via childcare reviews and supervision visits to foster carers. However, information within the handbook provided to carers is very general and does not outline the fostering services expectations of its carers with regard to this area of practice.

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?	1
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The lack of foster care placements is a nationally recognised resource issue. As such, it is acknowledged that due to the limited number of vacant placements available, it is often difficult to ensure matching to a carer who can meet the child's individual needs. However, the process by which placements are made requires ongoing review.

A placement officer carries out the process of matching children to the most appropriate foster care placements. In recognition that this process did not always enable consultation with fostering social workers, working practices were amended to assist the duty fostering social worker to work alongside the placement officer. However, information received and observations during the inspection indicate that very little joint working still takes place with regard to placement decisions.

Where 'out of approval' placements are made, a monitoring form is completed, although there was little evidence of this information being routinely monitored. However, practice must be brought in line with regulations 34 & 38, which clearly identify that (1) except in the case of an emergency or immediate placement, placements must be consistent with the terms of the foster carer's approval and (2) where emergency placements are made, they should not exceed 24 hours.

A draft placement agreement has been developed within the fostering service with a view to ensuring that the requirements of schedule 6 of the Fostering Services regulations are complied with. The proposed document is comprehensive and represents excellent practice with regard to ensuring that relevant aspects of matching, placement planning and support are covered. Additional information with regard to outlining the requirements for foster carers compliance to the agreement and for co-operation by the foster carers with the responsible authority is required in line with points 7 & 8 of schedule 6. The agreement would also benefit from greater clarity with regard to detailing the circumstances in which it is necessary to obtain in advance the required approval for the child to take part in school trips or to stay overnight away from the foster parents' home.

Information provided to carers needs to outline the process and purpose of introductions.

Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8)
The fostering service protects each child or young person from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and deprivation.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	1
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Information provided during the course of the inspection identified examples of good practice and of significant gaps with regard to ensuring that all required systems are in place, and implemented in practice, to protect young people from all forms of abuse.

Whilst matters pertaining to safe caring are covered within pre-approval training for foster carers, no evidence of recent child protection training by carers or staff was provided. Training undertaken must cover all areas identified by Standard 9.2.

The fostering service is clear in its expectations that corporal punishment is not acceptable, in any form. This has consistently been set out in written information provided to carers and is included in the draft version of the new foster care agreement. Management systems are in place to collate information regarding the circumstances, number and outcome of all allegations of neglect and abuse of a child in foster care. However, no evidence was seen with regard to the process by which such information is evaluated.

A new risk management document has been developed and is provided to foster carers post approval. This includes information regarding procedures for use if a foster child is missing from home.

Evidence from foster carers and staff of the fostering service indicates that full information about the foster child and his/her family is not always provided. Concerns were also expressed regarding the lack of expediency with which information sharing meetings were organised following emergency placements.

Whilst systems, such as the supervision recording report, are in place to record instances of bullying involving children who are fostered, no evidence of this information being routinely recorded is available. Issues pertaining to the particular vulnerability of looked after children and their susceptibility to bullying would benefit from a higher profile and more proactive practice than currently exists within the fostering service.

Information regarding safe caring guidelines is provided for each foster care household and information from staff and carers indicates that specific guidelines are developed for each foster home. However, this practice needs to be further developed to ensure, in line with standard 9.3, such guidelines are cleared with the placing social worker and are explained clearly and appropriately to the child.

Of particular concern to the inspection team is the current lack of behaviour management training for foster carers and associated concerns regarding conflicting information being provided to carers regarding the physical restraint of young people. The fostering service, in line with other childcare services within the authority has adopted TCI (Therapeutic Crisis Intervention) as its preferred method of behaviour management. This training has been adapted to ensure that it underpins the current policy of 'no restraints' within foster care placements. The current position of no TCI training having been available for 12-months+ clearly undermines the implementation of the policy on acceptable means of control and discipline of young people in foster care. It is also of concern to the inspection team that the proposed training programme for carers indicates that TCI training would only be completed 12-24 months after approval. In addition, it is essential that the proposed foster care agreement be reviewed, as in its current form the information regarding physical intervention is contrary to the 'no restraint' policy of the fostering service.

Percentage of foster children placed who report never or hardly ever being bullied: This information was not collated during this inspection.	X	%
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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

Information contained within the Looked After Children (LAC) paperwork and the proposed foster placement agreement highlights the importance of promoting contact between young people in foster care and their families. Emphasis on maintaining friendships is less overt but the systems are in place to ensure that this area of contact is not overlooked. Foster carers visited as part of the inspection were generally positive regarding their role of working in partnership with parents. Where difficulties have arisen, foster carers reported that support from fostering social workers was available. Financial support is also available. Contact is covered during the pre-approval training. However, no mention of further contact training appears in the post-approval training plan. Given the significance of this area of practice, this aspect of training would benefit from review.

Foster carers are provided with diaries, within which they are required to record significant events. Of concern, is the apparent lack of consistency with regard to how foster carers are informed of what information is to be recorded and how. Whilst there is positive evidence that this matter is discussed with foster carers during the supervision process, evidence indicates that information provided is variable and dependent upon the skills and experience of the fostering social worker as opposed to a consistent and clear policy/procedure. Inclusion of guidelines/expectations regarding recording, within a handbook for foster carers would improve this area of practice.

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?**

2

Young people and where appropriate, their families/significant others, are consulted via the statutory review process. Evidence seen indicates that such reviews are held within the required timescales and that young people's views are sought. The fostering service has also developed a consultation format for gathering the views of young people during the annual review of foster carers process. This is will be implemented in the near future.

Participation events for looked after young people have been organised. Evidence seen indicates that these events have been successful in consulting with young people on a range of issues and that service delivery has been improved to take account of issues raised during the consultation process. An example of this is the appointment of an advocacy worker for children with disabilities.

Communicating with children and young people is a feature of post approval training for foster carers. However, concerns regarding the lack of training currently available in general, impacts upon the likelihood of this training having been widely available.

The children's guide includes information regarding the process for complaints and also includes other services available such as the Rights and Participation Project (RAPP) and the children's Hotline, which is a direct line to a senior manager within the social services department. However, there is a lack of clarity with regard to how this information is communicated to the 13+ age group, given the lack of a children' guide. This requires expedient development.

Despite the evidence of good practice with regard to consulting with children, information received during the course of the inspection indicates that it remains very difficult for projects such as RAPP to access young people in foster care.

Evidence provided indicates that the negative attitudes of some foster carers to 'children's rights' remain a key barrier to participation being improved. It is hoped that the proposed presentation by RAPP to the foster care support groups will assist with children's rights being given the priority profile that it requires. However, consideration to including this work within the pre-approval training could also be a means of 'setting the scene' for children's rights at an early stage of the fostering process and may be crucial to introducing the required culture with regard to children's rights and participation.

Standard 12 (12.1 - 12.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

A significant development with regard to the promotion of the health needs of looked after children was the withdrawal of the support of health co-ordinators. This has had a direct impact upon the provision of fully completed health records for children in foster care and in the general overall quality of provision of services and information to fostering staff and carers. However, the inspector was informed that the support of health professionals, including a health co-ordinator and a nurse, for looked after children has recently been reinstated. Whilst the parameters of this support have been amended from previous provision, it is hoped that the quality of health support for young people and information to foster carers will improve.

Training must be provided, as identified within standard 12.5, to each carer approved by the fostering service. Evidence of carers providing information about a child's health needs was seen within review and planning meeting documentation.

Positive links have been developed between the fostering service and health agencies. The provision of information identified by standard 12.6, within a handbook for carers would provide clarity and consistency regarding the role of foster carers in promoting the health needs of young people in their care. In addition, the provision of information/guidelines regarding the use of 'home remedies' and the monitoring/recording of medication would also be beneficial. A record of accidents occurring to children whilst placed with foster carers must be developed and maintained.

During the course of the inspection, it became clear that the priority given to matters pertaining to the health needs of young people does not compare favourably with the current priority given to education. Information provided to the inspectors indicates that this is not a reflection on the fostering service itself but links to the impact of decisions taken at a corporate level, by the Local Authority.

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
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Within the fostering service, a high priority is given to meeting the educational needs of each young person in foster care. Clear guidelines and expectations of the foster carer's role have been provided to each fostering household, along with more general advice and information regarding educational provision. The role of educational coordinators is seen as being very positive in respect of the support available to young people, foster carers and fostering social workers and with regard to ensuring that Personal Education Plans (PEPs) are completed. A quality assurance role with regard to the provision of PEPs is also undertaken via the education coordinator service. Training with regard to the provision and role of PEPs has been provided but was unfortunately poorly attended by foster carers. Systems are in place to collate educational attainment and numbers excluded. The latter is a recent development within the fostering service and it is acknowledged that ongoing work is required to ensure that carers provide all relevant information. The fostering service makes clear its expectations regarding the structured occupation of young people who are not at school.

Matters pertaining to school costs are identified within the proposed foster placement agreement. However, this would benefit from greater clarity regarding who pays for school trips or when additional funding should be requested.

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
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Recent developments have been made with regard to the training, information and support provided to carers and thereby enabling them to support young people in their preparations for independent or semi-independent living. The fostering service works in partnership with the Young People's Support Service (YPSS) to provide information and support for carers and young people in line with the requirements of the Children (Leaving Care) Act. This includes the provision of pathway plans for young people.

It is acknowledged by the managers of the fostering service that service provision requires ongoing development with regard to foster carers providing all children in their care with age and developmentally appropriate opportunities for learning independence skills.

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?

2

In response to a requirement from the previous inspection, recruitment procedures have now been amended to incorporate telephone enquiries being made to follow up written references. However, gaps remain with regard to the information required by Schedule 1 of the Fostering Services Regulations. Proof of identity, including a recent photograph is required. In addition, whilst the recruitment process identifies that evidence of qualifications is seen at interview, no documentary evidence of this process being implemented was available. CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) checks are routinely undertaken on all staff, and have been updated for existing staff. Recruitment information with regard to a pending fostering social worker appointment was also seen and highlighted positive practice with regard to ensuring that appropriate references were received.

All personnel responsible for the recruitment and selection of staff are trained in, understand and operate the recruitment and selection procedures.

In line with NMS 15.5, all social work staff must have or be working towards a suitable professional qualification, to work with children and young people, their families and foster carers. In addition, NMS 15.6 states that any social work staff involved in assessment and approval of foster carers are 'qualified social workers'. Information provided during the inspection indicated a significant gap with regard to this matter. This requires expedient review in line with the requirements of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002 and the associated national minimum standards.

The managers of the fostering service must ensure that matters pertaining to the qualifications and experience of specialist advisors as identified within standard 15.7, are addressed.

Total number of staff of the agency:

25

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

8

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?****2**

The fostering service has recently re-organised in line with a previous reorganisation undertaken within the childcare teams and family support services. All services are now provided within an area structure and fostering social workers are developing specific links with area childcare services. It is hoped that this role within the fostering service will provide a positive foundation for fostering social workers and children's social workers to develop a greater understanding of each other's role and to generally enable a more effective working relationship than reportedly exists at this present time.

Clear structures and systems are in place with regard to assessments, approvals and reviews. Supervision of staff provides opportunity for determining, prioritising and monitoring workloads. Training portfolios for carers require development.

There are clear procedures, implemented in practice with regard to the use of agency placements. The inspector was informed that an agreement format is currently being developed to ensure that all aspects of agency placements, as required by regulation 40, are adhered to.

A further positive area of development is the recent recruitment of a marketing assistant who will work directly to the fostering managers with regard to implementing a consistent and expedient approach to all enquiries from and initial visits to prospective carers.

Staff have copies of information detailed within standard 16.16 and all staff are provided with written contracts, job descriptions and conditions of service. Some concern was raised with regard to the delay in the provision of contracts of employment. This process would benefit from review. Information provided to the inspection team indicates inconsistent practice with regard to ensuring that all permanent appointments are subject to the satisfactory completion of a period of probation. This requires review.

Information provided during the inspection indicates that an appropriate level of administrative support is available for the service. Concerns were expressed regarding the lack of provision with regard to IT equipment for fostering social workers. This gap in provision was considered to directly impact upon the efficiency and effectiveness of some areas of working practice. The inspection team was informed that equipment has been identified but that they delay in this becoming operational is causing some concern and frustration.

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?****2**

The service has a large staff team, which encompasses a wide range of skills and experience. A dedicated Marketing and Information officer supports the fostering service. Evidence of the recruitment strategy seen indicates that positive and proactive action is undertaken to target recruitment to the areas of most need. Information provided during the inspection indicates that the staffing complement is adequate to meet the current needs of the fostering service, although a review of the work undertaken by unqualified staff is required. Evidence of contingency planning to manage staffing shortfalls is available and implemented in practice. This has reflected in ongoing recruitment campaigns, which has recently seen the fostering service brought back to a full staffing complement.

The format for the assessment of foster carers follows that recommended by the British Adoption and Fostering Agency (BAAF). A competency based assessment format is now

being undertaken within the fostering service. This is evidenced in practice. Significant developments within the fostering service have sought to improve the retention of carers and staff, although the current lack of provision of training is acknowledged to be an area of concern at this present time.

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?

2

The fostering service has clear policies and procedures with regard to employment practices. Positive and comprehensive systems are in place for the supervision of foster carers. Very positive feedback was received from carers in respect of the support and supervision they receive from the fostering social workers. Foster carers can access out of hours support via the departmental emergency duty team and pockets of support exist within the fostering service itself. However, the inspection team was informed that the development of a more direct support, via the fostering service, is currently being considered. This is a welcome service development given the current inconsistency of practice that exists within the fostering service.

A whistle blowing policy has recently been developed in draft form and requires implementation.

A clear and comprehensive health and safety policy is available to staff and carers but no evidence of this being available to children was provided and greater clarification is required in respect of the process by which carers are familiarised with their responsibilities under this policy/procedure.

Standard 19 (19.1 - 19.7)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

1

Information provided to the inspector indicated that significant development is required in respect of the provision of training for staff. Staff induction, post qualifying and in-house training programmes have been developed but require effective implementation and ongoing review. Discussions with staff raised concerns regarding the staff appraisal process. Information received by the inspectors indicated that the appraisal process is viewed, by some staff, as being 'superficial' and as having little impact in shaping the overall provision of training provided.

No evidence of regular joint training between carers and staff was provided. The effectiveness of training programmes for staff must be routinely evaluated, reviewed and updated, at least annually.

Evidence provided during the inspection indicated a variable response with regard to the effectiveness of staff induction. This process would therefore benefit from review.

Supervision, staff meetings and service development days, are all effective means by which staff and carers are informed of changes in legislation or guidance that is relevant to their jobs. Positive feedback was received regarding the value of team meetings and development days for staff.

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)		
All staff are properly accountable and supported.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>All staff have clear written details of their duties and responsibilities and are accountable within the organisation. Departmental policy determines that monthly supervision must be undertaken. Evidence seen indicates that supervision is planned in advance, on a monthly basis and that a record of the content of supervision is maintained. However, gaps with regard to the frequency of supervision are not consistently evidenced within supervision records held. In addition, the focus of supervision, as evidenced by recording undertaken, is the review of direct work with carers. Although discussions with staff indicated that matters pertaining to workload monitoring, performance, support and training were discussed within the supervision arena, very little documented evidence was available to support this being undertaken with any regularity. In line with departmental policy, the process for supervision recording would therefore benefit from review.</p> <p>Twice yearly achievement and development reviews are undertaken with staff, although as noted, the effectiveness of this process has been raised as a concern.</p> <p>Staff have the opportunity to attend regular staff and team meetings.</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>There is a clear strategy for working with foster carers. At present, much of the information outlined within Standard 21.2 is documented and provided to carers. However, the process for circulating information to foster carers is piecemeal and requires review in terms of ensuring that all required information is documented and understood by all relevant parties.</p> <p>The fostering service has worked hard to ensure that a wide range of support services is available to its foster carers. This has also successfully addressed the need to reduce drift of foster carers to the independent sector. One feature of the support services available to carers is the provision of psychological support. This support is provided on a consultancy basis and assists foster carers to understand and manage children with challenging behaviour and/or complex needs. Evidence provided to the inspection team indicates that this has been a valued source of support to both carers and fostering social workers. Stress management courses have also been provided for foster carers and fostering social workers. However, the inspection team was also advised that confusion does arise with regard to the provision of this service and the range of services available to children and young people via the multi-agency link teams. Information aimed at clarifying the aims and objectives of these two services would be beneficial for carers.</p> <p>Both the fostering social workers and the foster carers understand the role of the fostering social worker. Fostering social workers reported that communication between themselves and the children's social workers can be variable in terms of quality and quantity. As noted, it is hoped, by those within the fostering service, that the recent re-organisation of the fostering team and the development of closer links between fostering social workers and childcare teams will begin the process of improving the system for communication between these two key parties.</p> <p>Annual reviews have taken place but greater attention is required to ensure that these are completed within the required 12 months timescale. The inspection team was informed that a new system for initiating carers' reviews is to be implemented.</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?**

1

The current foster care agreement does not meet the requirements as identified by Regulation 28(5)(b). However, this has been acknowledged by the fostering service and a new draft foster care agreement has been developed and was available for inspection. Generally, this is a very positive document in respect of meeting the regulatory requirements. Review of the following areas is required to ensure full compliance. The procedure in connection with the placement of children and the matters to be included in any foster placement agreement must be included. The information with regard to physical intervention is contrary to the fostering service policy of 'no restraints' and therefore requires review. Foster carers must be expected to specifically comply with the policies and procedures of the fostering service with regard to regulations 12 & 13. This must be more explicitly stated within the foster care agreement.

Each foster carer has a named fostering support worker. However, the role of unqualified fostering staff must be reviewed in line with standard 22.3. It is a requirement that the supervising social worker ensures that each carer he/she supervises is informed in writing of and accepts, understands and operates within, all standards, policies and guidance agreed by the fostering service. Whilst induction visits are undertaken with a view to imparting information and ensuring that the foster carer agreement is signed, in line with standard 22.5, carers must be given a handbook which covers the aforementioned policies and procedures as well as information regarding legal information and insurance details. The current handbook received by carers is generic, only relates to looking after children who are aged 11 and under and does not always reflect the policies of the fostering service.

A positive system for supervision of foster carers has been developed within the service. Fostering social workers are required to undertake recorded supervision on a minimum of a monthly basis. Evidence indicates that this target of monthly supervision has lapsed on occasions, although ongoing improvements to the frequency of visits are noted. Foster carers files include records of supervisory visits undertaken. The requirement for at least one unannounced visit per year has recently been introduced and evidence of this being undertaken was seen. Evidence of records seen indicates that both carers are not routinely seen during supervision and that in some instances there were significant gaps with regard to ensuring that *both carers* are seen for supervision. This requires review.

A system of practical support as outlined by Standard 22.7 is available to carers, although as noted, the current format for the out-of-office hours support requires review.

Record of complaints and representations and allegations of abuse are separately maintained within the fostering service. Greater clarification is required with regard to how such information is evaluated with regards to informing the future provision of services. Also, a clear policy framework, which outlines the circumstances in which a carer should be removed from the foster carer register, should be developed.

The fostering service also provides two independent support workers who are available to support carers during an investigation.

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?**

1

Training for foster carers requires expedient review and implementation in respect of ensuring that all the requirements for training, as detailed within the national minimum standards are met. Whilst a proposal for future training has been completed, there is a lack of clarity as to when the proposal will be implemented and, as such, when required training will be available. As noted within standard 9, the lack of Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) training is of particular concern. In addition, attention should be given to the training needs of particular groups, for example, male carers and the children of foster carers. Safe caring training for all members of the foster care household should also be provided.

It is acknowledged that the provision of training broadly lies outside the remit of the fostering service, in so far as it is provided by the Social Services training section. However, the potential consequences for not ensuring that foster carers are trained in the skills required to provide high quality care and meet the needs of each child/young person in their care was a central and reoccurring theme throughout this inspection.

Pre-approval training is provided by staff within the fostering service and includes opportunities for potential carers to benefit from the experience and knowledge of existing carers. However, the inspectors were informed that development of the 'buddy' scheme between carers local to each other would be beneficial both during induction and post approval. Induction training is planned for new carers but evidence of this being routinely undertaken was not provided.

Evidence seen indicated that the fostering service has endeavoured to seek foster carers' views with regard to the timing of and venues for training. Information relating to childcare requirements and expenses for training has also been collated.

With regard to the proposed training for foster carers, this needs to be developed to ensure that, in line with standard 23.4, where two adults in one household are approved as joint carers, both successfully complete all training. Whilst this is a requirement for pre-approval training, no evidence of this continuing post approval was noted.

The inspection team was informed that in an attempt to address some of the training shortfalls, the role of NVQ assessor/training co-ordinator has been developed within the fostering service. The aim of this role is to ensure that an ongoing programme of training and self-development for carers is provided, that the effectiveness of training received is evaluated and reviewed annually. Work is also being undertaken to develop the range of means by which training is provided within the service. Support to carers undertaking NVQ qualifications is also provided with the aim to increasing the number of carers who achieve this qualification.

Whilst the development of this role is deemed to be of positive benefit to foster carers and the provision of training, significant progress is required to ensure regulatory compliance with regard to the training and development of carers.

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?
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Standard met?

2

Children's records are not held within the fostering service. They are held and maintained within the local authority childcare teams. A written policy with regard to case recording is available but this would benefit from greater clarity with regard to the specific requirements of recording undertaken by foster carers. Records inspected indicated a high quality of information held on children's files and a comprehensive file audit system to ensure that this information is kept up to date and to the required standard.

With regard to agency placements, the inspectors were informed that an 'overarching' service level agreement is currently being developed to ensure that all aspects, as required by Regulation 40, are included.

The inspection team received variable information with regard to the quality and quantity of information provided to carers prior to or upon a child's placement. It is hoped that the implementation of the new placement agreement form will go some way to addressing the gaps identified.

Secure file boxes and guidance regarding the safe storage of information are provided to carers.

With regard to standards 24.5 no evidence was seen to indicate that foster carers are overtly made aware of their role with regard to encouraging a child to reflect on his/her history and to keep appropriate memorabilia. Training with regard to life story work and communicating with children is included in the proposed training programme for 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?
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Standard met?

2

Administrative records, as outlined within standard 25.2, are proactively maintained within the fostering service. Policy guidance regarding the access to and retention of files/information is available and understood by those working within the fostering service. However, the process by which foster carers are encouraged to access their files and to make additions, comments or record personal statements, including any dissent, requires review and implementation. (Standards 25.7 & 25.12)

Of concern to the inspector, is the fact that whilst records are maintained within lockable cabinets, the cabinets are not fire proof. Given the sensitivity and significance of the information stored, the inspector recommends that more appropriate storage for all records is considered.

A record, in respect of each person working for the fostering service must be maintained in line with the requirements of schedule 2.

With regard to the storing and management of information provided to panel members, each panel member is verbally informed of expectations with regard to information management and are provided with written guidance developed by BAAF and adopted as good practice within the Hull Local Authority Fostering Service.

Evidence of foster carer recruitment indicates that records are kept with regard to checks and references that have been obtained and their outcomes.

In addition to records maintained on complaints and allegations, the inspector was informed that information pertaining to these matters is recorded on staff and carers' files. Evidence is available to indicate that a system for monitoring the quality and adequacy of records and that remedial action is taken when necessary. However, the inspection team was informed that this system has been suspended due to recent shortfalls within the management staffing complement. It is hoped that this area of good practice will be reinstated at the earliest opportunity.

Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:	486
Number of placements made by the agency in the last 12 months: +**	288
Number of placements made by the agency which ended in the past 12 months: +** including movements between foster care households.	301
Number of new foster carers approved during the last 12 months:	46
Number of foster carers who left the agency during the last 12 months:	61
Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £	83.93
Maximum £	144.90

+ It is important to note that the above information includes those placements made via the Barnardos short break service.

* This represents the maximum basic fostering allowance. Additional allowances are paid to long term, adolescent and sibling group carers and also to mainstream carers via additional task allowances.

Fitness of Premises for use as Fostering Service

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

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

Standard 26 (26.1 - 26.5)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The fostering service has its own identifiable office premises, within a larger office provision, which is accessible to staff and visitors during office hours. The building itself is difficult to navigate for those not familiar with the surroundings. However, for the most part, staff reported that this presented no particular issues with regard to day-day working practices. Room for meetings is at a premium and requires careful planning and booking arrangements. A large meeting room is available on the first floor of the building. Information technology (IT) and communication systems are appropriately secured. With regard to providing an equipped base from which staff work, staff reported that the expedient implementation of additional IT systems, for use by staff, would be beneficial.

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?
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This standard does not apply to Local Authority fostering services.	
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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?
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This standard does not apply to Local Authority fostering services.	
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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

It is acknowledged by the management of the fostering services that improvement is required with regard to the information provided to carers regarding financial matters.

Questionnaires received from foster carers predominantly reported satisfaction with regard to prompt receipt of payments. Where difficulties have arisen, the role of the fostering social worker, in resolving these, has been positively reported.

Allowances and fees are reviewed annually. However, the significant issue requiring resolution relates to the implementation of the 'Payment for Skills' scheme. Evidence indicates that there is considerable confusion with regard to the proposed implementation date for this scheme. This requires clarification.

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?

2

The Hull fostering service operates two fostering panels, one of which was directly observed during the course of this inspection. An interview was also undertaken with the panel chair and vice-chair.

Whilst panel members are provided with the BAAF booklet regarding fostering panels, it is recommended that the policies and procedures regarding the functions and decision-making responsibilities of the panel be developed. In line with NMS 30.2, this information should include written procedures to cover decision-making when all panel members are not in agreement.

Criminal records bureau checks are undertaken for all panel members and current practice determines that, prior to panel membership being agreed, all potential panel members meet with the panel chair. This area of good practice would benefit from being underpinned by written guidance which outlines both the requirements regarding suitability of panel members as well as formally clarifying the role of the panel chair.

Medical expertise is available to the fostering panel and observations indicated that this is constructively considered during the panel discussions regarding approval/re-approval.

Panel membership has been reviewed and amendments made in line with the requirements of the Fostering Service Regulations 2002. Education and health representatives are included in panel membership as independent members. The inclusion of elected members remains an outstanding requirement, although the inspector was informed that discussions were imminent with two elected members who had expressed an interest in becoming panel members. In line with standard 30.9, panel membership would benefit from the inclusion of a person who has at any time been placed with foster carers or whose child has at any time been placed with foster carers.

Observation and information provided during the panel inspection indicates a gap in practice with regard foster carers who wish to voluntarily cease fostering. Written notice from the foster carer must be received, whereupon approval is terminated with effect from 28 days from the date on which notice is received by the fostering service.

Fostering panels are required to provide a quality assurance function in relation to the assessment process. Information provided and direct observations indicate that this is an area of proactive practice. Business meetings between the panel chairs, vice chairs and the management of the fostering service are also undertaken and provide a positive forum for ensuring consistency of approach, for feedback regarding practice issues and for monitoring the range and type of foster carers available to the authority in comparison with the needs of children. Monitoring information is updated on a monthly basis with regard to matters pertaining to approvals/deregistration of foster carers and outstanding needs with regard to referrals for placements. Foster panels were also observed to receive and proactively manage information regarding the annual review of foster carers.

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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Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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The fostering service operates two distinct short-term break services for children in foster care.

The short-term break service for children with disabilities is operated via a service level agreement with Barnardos. This scheme was not inspected on this occasion, as Barnardos is subject to its own separate inspection as a fostering service provider. However, the inspection team was informed that the current service level agreement is under review, in line with developments within the service and should be operational by April 2004. Upon completion, a copy of the service level agreement is to be supplied to the NCSC.

The second short-term break scheme is operated via the family support services provided by the local authority social services department. This service operates from a separate site to fostering services provided for mainstream/scheme carers. The inspection team was informed that the two sites operate within the same policy and procedure framework, but that the line management hierarchy is separate. Full team meetings of the fostering service as a whole regularly take place to underpin the requirement for consistent working practices.

Inspection activity undertaken with regard to the short break scheme indicated positive practice with regard to support to carers, the centrality of birth parents' roles and clear guidelines for practice should the placements develop outside of the short-term break remit.

Of concern to the inspection team was the apparent oversight of this service within the information provided to the inspectors and with regard to the inspection process as a whole. Information provided for future inspections must reflect the complete picture with regard to fostering services managed by the local authority. It is imperative that the statement of purpose reflects all fostering services currently provided by the local authority.

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?	1
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Inspection activity and information received indicates that the mechanisms for assessing and approving family and friends as carers are designed in a way that encourages their consideration as carers. This is positively represented by the manner in which medical considerations are assessed in the context of the specific requirements of the child to be placed and in recognition of relationships that have already developed between the child and the proposed carer/s. This important balance is also reflected in discussion undertaken at the fostering panels. 72 family network carer households were currently approved at the time of the inspection.

Unfortunately, the same rigorous and balanced approach cannot be said to exist with regard to the support for and training of family network carers. Evidence of records seen indicate that with regard to one family network carer file, the last recorded entry was made in July 2000. Case records for family network carers must meet the requirements of regulation 30. Information provided indicates a lack any coherent and consistent practice with regard to the support and training provided to family network carers.

The inspection team was informed that the approval and support of family network carers currently remains the responsibility of the childcare teams. Fostering social workers had previously been employed to ensure consistency and dedicated support to family network carers, but that these workers had recently moved on. In acknowledgement of the need for these services to continue to be provided via the fostering service, recruitment of a team of fostering social workers, and a team leader, is imminent. This current recruitment represents an increase in the level of services to be provided for family network carers and it is hoped that this will address the current significant imbalance with regard to the support and training provided to family network carers as compared to that received by mainstream carers.

PART C

LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY

(where applicable)

N/A

Lay Assessor _____ **Signature** _____

Date _____

Action taken by the NCSC 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.

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 NCSC inspection reports are public documents. Reports on children's homes are only obtainable on personal application to NCSC offices.

D.3 PROVIDER'S AGREEMENT

Please complete the relevant section that applies.

D.3.1 I, Margaret Dennison of Kingston upon Hull City Council Fostering Service, confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above dates and that I agree with the statutory requirements made and will seek to comply with these.

Print Name _____
Signature _____
Designation _____
Date _____