

# inspection report

Fostering Services

**Time For Children**

24 Mossford Street

London

E3 4TH

20th to 24th September 2004

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

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

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

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

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

## **Inspection Methods & Findings**

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

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

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

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

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

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

## FOSTERING SERVICE INFORMATION

**Local Authority Fostering Service?**

NO

**Name of Authority**

**Address**

**Local Authority Manager**

**Tel No:**

**Address**

**Fax No:**

**Email Address**

**Registered Fostering Agency (IFA)**

YES

**Name of Agency**

Time For Children

**Tel No**

0870 241 6333

**Address**

24 Mossford Street, London, E3 4TH

**Fax No**

**Email Address**

admin@timeforchildren.org.uk

**Registered Number of IFA**

G060000210

**Name of Registered Provider**

Time For Children Limited

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

Mrs Janet Digby-Baker

**Date of first registration**

29th September 2003

**Date of latest registration certificate**

29th September 2003

**Registration Conditions Apply ?**

NO

**Date of last inspection**

18/08/03

<b>Date of Inspection Visit</b>		20 <sup>th</sup> -24th September 2004		<b>ID Code</b>
<b>Time of Inspection Visit</b>		10:00 am		
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>1</b>	Ms Sharon Lewis	073298	
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>2</b>			
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>3</b>			
<b>Name of Inspector</b>	<b>4</b>			
<b>Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable)</b> Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the CSCI. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process.				
<b>Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)</b>				
<b>Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection</b>		Mrs Janet Digby-Baker, Registered Manager Ms Rebecca Hall, Responsible Individual		

**Introduction to Report and Inspection**

**Inspection visits**

**Description of Fostering Service**

**Part A: Summary of Inspection Findings**

**Reports and Notifications to the Local Authority and Secretary of State**

**Implementation of Statutory Requirements from last Inspection**

**Statutory Requirements from this Inspection**

**Good Practice Recommendations from this Inspection**

**Part B: Inspection Methods & Findings**

**(National Minimum Standards For Fostering Services)**

- 1. Statement of purpose**
- 2. Fitness to carry on or manage a fostering service**
- 3. Management of the fostering service**
- 4. Securing and promoting welfare**
- 5. Recruiting, checking, managing, supporting and training staff and foster carers**
- 6. Records**
- 7. Fitness of premises**
- 8. Financial requirements**
- 9. Fostering panels**
- 10. Short-term breaks**
- 11. Family and friend carers**

**Part C: Lay Assessor's Summary (where applicable)**

**Part D: Provider's Response**

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

**D.2. Action Plan**

**D.3. Provider's agreement**

## INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

Independent and local authority fostering services which fall within the jurisdiction of the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) are subject to inspection, to establish if the service is meeting the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services and the requirements of the Care Standards Act 2000, the Fostering Services Regulations 2002 and the Children Act 1989 as amended.

This document summarises the inspection findings of the CSCI in respect of Time For Children. The inspection findings relate to the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services published by the Secretary of State under sections 23 and 49 of the Care Standards Act 2000, for independent and local authority fostering services respectively.

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

The report will show the following:

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

This report is a public document.

## INSPECTION VISITS

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

#### **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED.**

Time for Children is an Independent Fostering Agency, which was established in 1999. Time for Children specialises in providing both long and short term placements for sibling groups. Their motto is 'enabling brothers and sisters to remain together'. The agency primarily place children from birth to 12 years of age. The age range is however extended for sibling groups in long term placements.

Time for Children prides itself on being a small, friendly extended family. The agency has approximately sixty children in placement and is continuing to grow. The Statement of Purpose states "Time for Children has a passionate belief in the welfare of the whole child, which includes personal, physical and social education."

The agency is based in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. The agency operates a 'teleworking' system and has carers in London and surrounding areas. The main office is situated 5 minutes from Mile End tube station and a contact centre is available.

## **PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **Inspector's Summary**

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

This is the agency's second inspection against the National Minimum Standards introduced from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2002.

The Inspector found that many of the National Minimum Standards were met or partially met and that the overall quality of care provided was good. The agency is commended for exceeding the minimum standards in four areas.

Questionnaires were received from nineteen children. All children expressed their satisfaction with their care. Special mention was made of the agency's policy of supplying bicycles to all children.

In addition seventeen completed questionnaires were received from foster carers. Overall foster carers provided positive feedback.

The majority of staff members and the Registered Manager and Responsible Individual were interviewed during the Inspection.

Positive feedback was additionally received from two placing authority social workers.

This Inspection resulted in five legal requirements and eleven recommendations being made.

The Inspector would like to thank all children, foster carers and staff for their assistance and co-operation in this Inspection.

### **Statement of Purpose (Standard 1)**

#### **This standard was met**

The Statement of Purpose covers all topics as stated in Standard 1 of the Fostering Services National Minimum Standards. An easy to read Children's Guide has been developed in consultation with both foster carers and children. The agency should ensure Children's Guide's are sent directly to the child subject to their age and understanding.

### **Fitness to Provide a Fostering Service (Standards 2-3)**

#### **2 of these 2 standards were met**

The family atmosphere and ethos permeated throughout the Inspection. The fostering agency evidenced that it is provided and managed by appropriately skilled management, to effectively and efficiently meet the demands of the role. The agency demonstrated that children are at the heart of the service.

### **Management of Fostering Service (Standards 4-5)**



**2 of these 2 standards were met**

The Inspector through interviewing the Registered Manager and Responsible Individual was satisfied that they were aware of their role and responsibilities. The agency is Pan London approved and is scheduled to receive formal accreditation from the National Association of Child Contact Centres.

**Securing and promoting welfare (Standards 6-14)****8 of these 9 standards were met, 2 were exceeded**

The agency is commended for their contact service and for promoting educational achievement. Foster Carer's core training programme includes Valuing Diversity and Promoting Self Esteem. The agency evidenced each child receives opportunities to develop and pursue their individual talents, interests and hobbies. The agency must ensure health and safety is routinely addressed and amendments must be made to relevant policies.

**Recruiting, checking, managing, supporting and training staff and foster carers (Standards 15-23)****6 of these 9 standards were met, 1 was exceeded**

The agency is commended for their support to carers. The agency demonstrated that there was sufficient staff with relevant experience and competent foster carers. Social work staff maintained good liaison with placing authorities. Good training opportunities are available for staff and foster carers. Personnel information must be maintained in accordance with regulations. Supervision records must be consistently recorded. All link workers must meet regularly with foster carers.

**Records (Standards 24-25)****1 of these 2 standards were met**

The confidentiality of records was seen to be maintained. Case files must be kept up to date and recordings should be more consistent.

**Premises (Standard 26)****This standard was met**

The premises is located in a terraced house and presents as a family home. There is a good range of facilities which include three contact rooms, a main meeting room, fitted kitchen, a garden with a canopy and a child safe lawn covering. The agency has adequate administrative systems. The premises and its contents are adequately insured.

**Finance requirements (Standards 27-29)****3 of these 3 standards were met, 1 was exceeded**

The agency is financially viable and appropriate financial managements systems and records are in place. The agency is commended for their ability to respond financially to children's individual needs. Foster carers are paid promptly; discretionary loans and settling in payments are also available.

**Fostering Panels (Standards 30)****This standard was met**

The panel is constituted in line with regulations. Observation of the foster panel evidenced that good quality and fair decisions are made in line with the overriding objective to promote and safeguard the welfare of children in foster care.

**Short-term breaks (Standard 31)**

This standard is not applicable to Time for Children.

**Family and friends as carers (Standard 32)**

This standard is not applicable to Time for Children.

## **Reports and Notifications to the Local Authority and Secretary of State**

**(Local Authority Fostering Services Only)**

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

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

NO

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

NO

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

NO

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

NO

**The grounds for the above Report or Notice are:**

## Implementation of Statutory Requirements from Last Inspection

Requirements from last Inspection visit fully actioned?

YES

**If No please list below**

### STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Identified below are areas not addressed from the last inspection report which indicate a non-compliance with the Care Standards Act 2000 and Fostering Services Regulations 2002.

No.	Regulation	Standard	Required actions	

**Action is being taken by the Commission for Social Care Inspection to monitor compliance with the above requirements.**

**COMPLIANCE WITH CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION (IF APPLICABLE)****(Registered Independent Fostering Agencies only)**

Providers and managers of registered independent fostering agencies must comply with statutory conditions of their registration. The conditions applying to this registration are listed below, with the inspector's assessment of compliance from the evidence at the time of this inspection.

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

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

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

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

**Lead Inspector**      **Sharon Lewis**  
**Second Inspector**      \_\_\_\_\_  
**Locality Manager**      \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**      \_\_\_\_\_

## STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS IDENTIFIED DURING THIS INSPECTION

Action Plan: The appropriate Officer of the Local Authority or the Registered Person (as applicable) is requested to provide the Commission with an Action Plan, which indicates how requirements are to be addressed. This action plan will be made available on request to the Area Office.

### STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Identified below are areas addressed in the main body of the report which indicate non-compliance with the Care Standards Act 2000, the Children Act 1989, the Fostering Services Regulations 2002, or the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services. The Authority or Registered Person(s) is/are required to comply within the given time scales in order to comply with the Regulatory Requirements for fostering services.

No.	Regulation	Standard *	Requirement	
1	11	FS6	The agency must ensure health and safety is routinely addressed at each foster carer visit.  Amendments must be made to relevant policies.	01.12.04
2	20	FS15	The fostering agency must ensure personnel information is maintained in accordance with Schedule with Schedule 1, Fostering Regulations 2002.	01.01.05
3	21	FS16	Supervision records must be consistently maintained.	01.12.04
4	35	FS22	The agency must ensure that link workers/supervising social workers meet regularly with foster carers.	01.12.04
5	22	FS24	The agency must maintain and keep up to date case files.	01.12.04

### 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	The agency should ensure the outcome of the recent complaint and subsequent complaints are included in the Statement of Purpose.
2	FS1	The agency should ensure Children's Guide's are sent directly to the child subject to their age and understanding.
3	FS7	The agency should provide supplementary systems to support transracial placements.
4	FS11	Consideration should be given to an additional forum where young people can actively raise concerns.
5	FS14	<p>The Supporting Children and Young People towards independent or semi-independent living Policy should be further developed.</p> <p>Foster carers should have detailed wwritten requirements of what is expected of them in terms of preparing children and young people for independent or semi-independent living.</p> <p>Foster carers should be further consulted to establish the support needed to enable them to manage adolescence</p>
6	FS21	It is recommended that the agency consider providing additional social activities for foster carers and children.
7	FS22	<p>The agency should produce a clear simple summary, which outlines the investigation of allegations process.</p> <p>The agency should additionally consider amending the foster carer agreement to address this issue.</p>
8	FS23	Specific consideration should be given to any help or support needed by the sons and daughters of foster carers.

9	FS24	The agency should consider standardisation and the developing of a centralised access to files database and appropriate templates.
10	FS29	The agency should clearly provide a breakdown of payments and allowances on approval, confirm the criteria for discretionary payments and clarify the payment policy regarding retainers.
11	FS30	<p>The agency should consider further joint training between panel members and agency social workers.</p> <p>The agency should consider inviting prospective foster carers to attend panel.</p>

- Note: You may refer to the relevant standard in the remainder of the report by omitting the 2-letter prefix e.g. FS10 refers to Standard 10.



**PART B****INSPECTION METHODS & FINDINGS**

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

Number of Inspector days spent

5

Survey of placing authorities

YES

Foster carer survey

YES

Foster children survey

YES

Checks with other organisations and Individuals

YES

- Directors of Social services

YES

- Child protection officer

YES

- Specialist advisor (s)

NO

- Local Foster Care Association

NO

Tracking Individual welfare arrangements

YES

- Interview with children

YES

- Interview with foster carers

YES

- Interview with agency staff

YES

- Contact with parents

NO

- Contact with supervising social workers

YES

- Examination of files

YES

Individual interview with manager

YES

Information from provider

YES

Individual interviews with key staff

YES

Group discussion with staff

YES

Interview with panel chair

YES

Observation of foster carer training

YES

Observation of foster panel

YES

Inspection of policy/practice documents

YES

Inspection of records

YES

Interview with individual child

YES

Date of Inspection

20/09/04

Time of Inspection

10:00AM

Duration Of Inspection (hrs)

40

The following pages summarise the key findings and evidence from this inspection, together with the CSCI assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards have been met. The following scale is used to indicate the extent to which standards have been met or not met by placing the assessed level alongside the phrase "Standard met?"

The scale ranges from:

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

"0" in the "Standard met?" box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion.

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

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

## Statement of Purpose

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

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

### Standard 1 (1.1 - 1.6)

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

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

3

The Statement of Purpose covers all topics as stated in Standard 1 of the Fostering Services National Minimum Standards. This includes the agency's management structure, services provided, objectives and values, relevant numbers of carers, staff, children, procedures for recruiting, approving and training carers, quality assurance system and panel procedures.

The Statement of Purpose has just been subject to a review, and will be reviewed again in the next six-months. The agency should ensure the outcome of the recent complaint and subsequent complaints are included in the Statement of Purpose.

The agency's policies, procedures and written guidance were found to accurately reflect the statement of purpose.

An easy to read Children's Guide has been developed in consultation with both foster carers and children. This booklet guide provides a summary of the services provided and includes complaints, independent advocacy and the Commission for Social Care Inspection details.

The Registered Manager related that all children had been sent a copy of the Children's Guide. The majority of children related they had received a Children's Guide. One child reported that they had not received a Children's Guide. The agency should ensure Children's Guide's are sent directly to the child subject to their age and understanding.

The agency has produced an individual 'welcome to our house' booklet for several foster carers. This is a short guide for the foster child about the foster family they have been placed with. The guide was found to be a good introduction for children. It was produced in a child friendly, easy to read format and contains photographs of the foster family and their home.

## Fitness to Carry On or Manage a Fostering Service

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

### Standard 2 (2.1 - 2.4)

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

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

3

The fostering agency evidenced that it is provided and managed by appropriately skilled management, to effectively and efficiently meet the demands of the role. The agency demonstrated that children are at the heart of the service. Staff support was evident and the Registered Manager acknowledged the professionalism and expertise of staff.

The Registered Manager has a professional social work qualification and has worked in the field of children and families social work for over 30 years. This has included ten years as a Guardian ad Litem and fifteen years as a freelance court welfare officer and expert witness. In addition to international social work and civil rights work in the United States of America. The Registered Manager is currently completing the NVQ Level 4 in Management and is also involved in local community projects.

The family atmosphere and ethos permeated throughout the Inspection. Foster children, children in the household, foster carers and staff all referred to the family atmosphere and sense of belonging to an extended family. Children fondly referred to the Registered Manager as 'Auntie Janet' and 'Grandma.'

Foster carers related that they greatly appreciated that "their own children are thought of" This included involvement in social activities, concern about their well being and financial gifts at birthdays and Christmas.

The Inspection concluded that the Registered Manager and Responsible Individual exercise effective leadership and endeavour to deliver the best possible childcare. Management highlighted areas for improvement and plans have been developed to address shortfalls.

**Standard 3 (3.1 - 3.4)**

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

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

The Inspector was satisfied through the whole inspection process that the Registered Manager is suitable to manage the service. Weekly meetings are held with the Responsible Individual. The Responsible Individual additionally monitors the agency through attendance at staff meetings, staff development days, training and panel membership.

Criminal Record Bureau checks are in place for all staff. The agency has developed a reference request form to progress outstanding staff references. This issue is further addressed under Standard 15.

## 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

The Inspector through interviewing the Registered Manager and Responsible Individual was satisfied that they were aware of their role and responsibilities. This role included setting procedures for monitoring and controlling the fostering service.

The agency has implemented and developed a Quality Assurance system. The Statement of Purpose states “Underpinning this Quality Assurance Tool is a keen commitment to continuous improvement to ensure that we fulfil our mission to provide a quality service for the children, families and local authorities that we serve.”

Monitoring processes are in place for children’s placements, staff, foster carers and the overall operation of the organisation.

The agency has proper financial procedures in place. The information with regard to charges, amounts paid to foster carers and details for itemised services are made available to purchasers of care.

The agency is Pan London approved and is scheduled to receive formal accreditation from the National Association of Child Contact Centres.

The agency informs carers, managers and staff of their responsibility to declare any possible conflicts of interest.

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

1

Death of a child placed with foster parents.

0

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

0

Serious illness or accident of a child.

0

Outbreak of serious infectious disease at a foster home.

0

Actual or suspected involvement of a child in prostitution.

0

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

0

Serious complaint about a foster parent.

0

Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.

1

#### Number of complaints made to CSCI about the agency in the past 12 months:

1

#### 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 Registered Manager has a central position in the day to day operations of the agency. Job descriptions were available in respect of the roles of permanent social work staff and those persons contracted to carry out work on behalf of the Agency.

The level of delegation and responsibility of the manager, and the lines of accountability are clearly defined. Clear arrangements are in place to identify the person in charge when the manager is absent. The staff team have delegated responsibilities. These include social work staff having geographical area responsibilities, assistant social worker posts, placement officer, resources manager, administrative and financial posts.

## 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

The Statement of Purpose states the agency is committed to "promoting a healthy lifestyle including participation in sport and healthy activities". This includes providing each child with a bicycle and paying for swimming lessons.

A total of four foster carers' homes were visited during this Inspection. Foster carers homes were found to be clean, comfortable, warm, adequately furnished and decorated. Homes were maintained to a good standard of hygiene. Four bedrooms were inspected and found to be very child focused with appropriate stimulating toys, books, equipment and items of personal significance to the child. Evidence was seen of foster carers moving or planning building work to accommodate children's needs.

Carers were aware of the Commission for Social Care Inspection and positively contributed to the inspection process. The foster carer's agreement specifies the Commission's inspection process and the requirement to be interviewed if requested.

Health and safety is addressed in the foster carers training and in the foster carers handbook. A health and safety checklist has also been introduced. A health and safety issue was however identified during a foster carers visit. The agency must ensure foster carer's homes are free from avoidable hazards, which might expose a child to risk of injury and harm. Health and safety must be routinely addressed at each foster carer visit. Amendments must be made to relevant policies.

### Standard 7 (7.1 - 7.7)

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

#### Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The agency has made efforts to promote equality and value diversity. The Statement of Purpose states Time for Children is committed to "Maintaining anti discriminatory attitudes and giving due consideration to race, religion, culture, disability, age, gender and sexual orientation."

The foster carers handbook addresses equal opportunities, valuing diversity and the needs of children with a disability. Foster Carer's core training programme includes Valuing Diversity and Promoting Self Esteem. In addition to caring for a child with a disability.

Files and visits demonstrated that foster carers and link workers were working co-operatively to address each child's specific needs. The agency evidenced each child receives encouragement and equal access to opportunities to develop and pursue their individual



talents, interests and hobbies.

During the Inspection it was noted that there are currently transracial placements. The agency has provided and advocated for support mechanisms for these placements. The responsible authority should provide the foster family with additional training, support and information to enable the best possible care. Additionally the responsible authority should enable the child to develop a positive understanding of their heritage.

The agency should provide supplementary systems to support transracial placements. Long term action planning should be developed and monitored to respect and preserve children's cultural heritage and enhance their self-esteem.

#### **Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.7)**

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

#### **Key Findings and Evidence**

#### **Standard met?**

**3**

The agency relies heavily on accurate information being received from local authorities in order to match appropriately. A Placements officer is in post who liaises with placing authorities.

The agency has implemented matching procedures. Matches are achieved by means of information sharing and consideration involving all relevant professionals, the child and her/his family and potential carers, their families and other children in placement.

The agency reported that even when it is inconvenient, they work hard to arrange a period of introduction of a child to the proposed new foster carer.

Placement agreements are in place for all foster carers.

#### **Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8)**

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

#### **Key Findings and Evidence**

#### **Standard met?**

**3**

Policies and procedures are in place to protect children from abuse and neglect. Core training for foster carers include child protection.

Each foster carer is issued with a 'Carer's Pack' which outlines the aims of the service and the responsibility of the carer. All carers are given the agency's policies and procedures and training is offered in line with safe caring.

Corporal punishment is clearly specified as being unacceptable and is addressed in the foster carers agreement. Policies are in place which details inappropriate sanctions.

The bullying policy highlights that foster carers must make every effort to prevent a child

from being bullied or engaging in bullying themselves.

The absconding policy provides the foster carer with a clear procedure, in the event of a child going missing.

Management systems are in place to monitor allegations. The agency was seen to have responded appropriately to a recent child protection enquiry.

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

100

%

**Standard 10 (10.1 - 10.9)**

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

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

4

The agency is commended for their contact service and the ability to provide child focused contact in a homely environment.

The Statement of Purpose states "Contact with family members and others who are important to the children is a priority for us and we are available to supervise contact, where appropriate". Pre inspection documentation stated "Our strong commitment to contact ensures that all our contact arrangements, whether they are at our contact centre or elsewhere are excellent."

The agency positively promotes contact as directed by the placing authority. The agency can actively facilitate contact by providing a venue, transport and a contact supervisor. Contact services can be additionally arranged for children not placed within the agency.

The agency has developed a clear policy which addresses how appropriate contact arrangements are to be established, maintained, monitored and reviewed. It is the agency's policy that contact does not take place at the foster care's home.

Staff support foster carers with managing any difficult contact issues that may arise. Documentation evidenced that foster carers record outcomes of contact arrangements and their perceived impact on the child; this information is fed back to the child's social worker.

The agency currently has three contact rooms and a fully equipped kitchen with dining area. A child friendly ground floor bathroom with nappy changing area is currently being built. Facilities for children include a Wendy House, playstation, books, a range of toys, garden and a sandpit. Refreshments are provided and facilities are available for meal preparation.

During the Commission for Social Care Inspection the agency also had an inspection by the National Association for Child Contact Centres. The Registered Manager reported that the outcome is for the agency to be recommended for accreditation as a child contact centre.

**Standard 11 (11.1 - 11.5)**

The fostering service ensures that children's opinions, and those of their families and others significant to the child, are sought over all issues that are likely to affect their daily life and their future.

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

The agency explained the opinions of children are ascertained during link workers visits and as part of the placing authority review procedure.

Questionnaires and discussions with foster carers and children evidenced that foster carers understand the importance of listening to the views of the children.

The agency should consider further age appropriate consultation opportunities for children. Consideration should be given to an additional forum where children can actively raise concerns.

**Standard 12 (12.1 - 12.8)**

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

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

Documentation and discussion evidenced that foster carers promoted the health of each child by registering them with health care professionals, ensuring that appointments were made and kept and acting as an advocate if and when necessary.

Foster carer's core training includes safe and healthy caring. This includes clear expectations to support and sustain healthy living principles.

Feedback from children additionally evidenced that a healthy lifestyle and diet was promoted.

Reviews with the placing authority further address a child's specific health care needs. The agency requires foster carers to supply information about the child's health needs for the planning and review process.

**Standard 13 (13.1 - 13.8)**

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

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****4**

The agency is commended for their commitment to promoting educational achievement for children. Foster carers visits and files evidenced the carers role in school contact, creating an environment where learning is valued; establishing an expectation of school attendance and supporting the child's full participation in school life.

Visits to foster carers evidenced the provision of appropriate toys and educational items relating to children's developmental age to promote learning. This included maps, books, charts and access to computers. Children related that their foster carer or the other children in the household assisted them with their homework.

Discussions with foster carers evidenced strong advocacy and an awareness of discrimination by educational establishments against children in the care system. Foster carers promoted educational achievements and higher education. In addition to encouraging children who were less academic.

The agency evidenced that individual educational packages can be arranged on an individual basis. The agency is commended for providing children with a computer if unavailable in the household.

The agency has a system for monitoring the educational attainment, progress and school attendance. Educational attainment is positively rewarded and there was evidence of a young person receiving a financial gift from the agency for achieving 10 GSCE's.

The agency is commended that all children are in full time education. Documentation and discussion with foster carers and staff evidenced that there had been a marked improvement in educational achievement. Children were receiving individual support where necessary, received positive feedback and awards from schools and personal educational plans were in place.

It was encouraging to see children engaged in a range of extra curricular activities that included learning musical instruments, developing their talents in various sports and being part of the school council.

**Standard 14 (14.1 - 14.5)**

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

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

The agency was originally established to provide a foster care service for children aged 0 to 12 years. The age range is however extended for sibling groups in long term placements.

The agency has developed a Supporting Children and Young People towards independent or semi-independent living Policy.

The policy states

“Time for Children develops a culture of building an extended family around all children and young people placed with us, and this does not end when a child reaches a particular chronological age. The agency aims to stay in touch with a young person after they have moved on, and we encourage and enable foster carers to do the same - with the young person’s consent.”

This policy highlights the commitment to supporting young people and foster carers during the process. This includes the following:

Introducing specific training for foster carers

Helping young people develop their social and living skills

Assist young people who are about to leave full-time compulsory education to find further educational, training or employment opportunities

Maintain contact with and monitor young people who have moved onto independent or semi-independent living and continue to provide advice, support and guidance to them

The Supporting Children and Young People towards independent or semi-independent living Policy should be further developed. Foster carers should have detailed written requirements of what is expected of them in terms of preparing children and young people for independent or semi-independent living. Foster carers should be further consulted to establish the support needed to enable them to manage adolescence.

## 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

The agency's recruitment policy provides clear written recruitment and selection procedures for appointing staff. The agency demonstrated that there was sufficient staff with relevant experience to meet the purposes and functions of the organisation.

Any social work staff involved in assessment and approval of foster carers are qualified social workers, have experience of foster care and family placement work and are trained in assessment. Where unqualified staff carry out social work functions they do so under the direct supervision of qualified social workers, who are accountable for their work.

Personnel files were examined for both staff and panel members. Gaps were found in relation to proof of qualifications, references and positive proof of identity including recent photographs. The fostering agency must ensure personnel information is maintained in accordance with Schedule 1, Fostering Regulations 2002. Information must include proof of identity, two written references, documentary evidence of relevant qualifications, and full employment history with satisfactory evidence of any gaps, if previously worked with children or vulnerable adults verification where practical, of why employment ended.

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

21

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

2

### 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 agency has a clear management structure with clear lines of accountability. The level of management delegation and responsibility are clearly defined. Staff members are delegated responsibilities appropriately dependent on skills, qualifications, experience and interest.

All fostering service social workers understand the role of the children's social workers. Records evidenced social work staff maintained good liaison with placing authorities.

Staff felt and it was observed that an appropriate level of clerical and administrative support was available. The agency has an adequate infrastructure and office equipment to enable

staff to recruit, assess, supervise and train staff effectively.

There is access to the range of advice needed to provide a full service for children and young people and to support carers. This includes appropriate childcare, medical, educational, and other professional and legal advice. This includes a network of therapists.

The Registered Manager and all staff confirmed that they receive regular supervision. The Registered Manager confirmed that staff receive daily supervision, however records were inconsistent. The agency must ensure supervision records are consistently maintained.

**Standard 17 (17.1 - 17.7)**

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

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

**3**

The agency has a good range of competent carers and a very experienced and diverse social work team. Evidence was seen of complimentary written feedback from several placing authorities relating to the service provided. All staff were found to be well motivated, with a good team spirit and ethos of peer support. Staff retention is not an issue.

Assistant social workers assist with the practical child support tasks. This includes escorting duties, respite during the day and taking children on social activities. Foster carers commended an individual worker on the Assistant social work team. Records were found to be comprehensively maintained by Assistant social work staff.

The agency has made plans to recruit more diverse sessional workers, which are culturally reflective of the children. Further male representation would be beneficial to promote positive male role models.

The agency has recruited a good range of carers to meet the needs of children for whom it aims to provide a service. Carers are recruited within the M25 radius. Freelance assessors are commissioned to undertake Form F assessment work. Since last year new Form F assessments on all foster carers have been completed, as required by the previous inspection. Foster carers reviews are in progress.

**Standard 18 (18.1 - 18.7)**

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

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

There is 24-hour management and support service provided for foster carers. Foster carers and staff confirmed this. Foster carers verbally identified satisfaction with the systems in place and commended link workers for making themselves contactable for advice and information. All foster carers felt valued by the agency.

Management systems were in place for carer's supervision, appraisal (review) and support. Staff and foster carers were aware of the whistle blowing policy. Employers public and liability insurance is in place.

**Standard 19 (19.1 - 19.7)**

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

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

The agency has a clear plan for the training and development of all staff involved in fostering work through induction, post-qualifying and in-service training. The Responsible Individual is also the Director of Training and Development.

Assistant social work staff have a specific training programme. This includes Time for Children's core policies and procedures (including Child Protection, Health & Safety, Confidentiality, Equal Opportunities and Complaints). Staff also received training in good practice for report writing, supervising contact and staff procedures ('house rules' and 'staff code of conduct'). The training is a standard 3-hour part of the monthly team meetings. All new workers are required to take part in the training programme, on top of the induction programme for staff, which includes work shadowing and coaching.

Pre-inspection documentation and discussion with staff evidenced that Time for Children has a commitment to supporting and encouraging the personal development of Assistant social work staff. This has included supporting and encouraging staff to undertake a professional social work qualification. One of the agency's existing social workers has been supported through this scheme.

Training needs for individual social work staff is assessed individually at their monthly supervision and collectively at the quarterly link work meetings. This year staff have attended Fostering Network training on supporting families and children. In addition to a two semester course, Children in Transition: Finding and Sustaining Placements at the Tavistock Institute.

Staff interviews evidenced that staff are kept informed of changes in any legislation or guidance that are relevant to their jobs.

The Responsible Individual interview and documentation evidenced the effectiveness of training programmes is routinely evaluated and training programmes are reviewed and updated. Training programmes reflect the policies of the fostering service.



<b>Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)</b> <b>All staff are properly accountable and supported.</b>		
<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>3</b>
<p>Staff spoken with were clear about their roles and accountability within the agency. All staff have clear written details of the duties and responsibilities expected of them, together with the policies and procedures of the organisation.</p> <p>The Responsible Individual stated that the Staff Appraisal System would be implemented by December 2004. Job descriptions are reviewed during the annual appraisal process.</p> <p>There was evidence of regular staff meetings and development days.</p>		

<b>Standard 21 (21.1 - 21.6)</b> <b>The fostering service has a clear strategy for working with and supporting carers.</b>		
<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>4</b>
<p>The service is commended for excelling in supporting carers in various capacities. Assistant social worker/sessional worker posts are in place to assist with practical issues. The agency evidenced a responsive service to carers, which included emotional support and follow-up.</p> <p>Carers receive fourteen nights annual respite. Children are additionally taken out every month during term time and one day every week during school holidays. This is dependent on the age of the child and guidelines are available.</p> <p>Each carer is allocated a social worker. However support is also provided by whole team including management and is not dependant on the link social worker being available. Generally foster carer's receive monthly visits and regular telephone contact. The agency also pays for each foster carer's membership of Fostering Network.</p> <p>Support group meetings are held bi-monthly. The agency provides local meetings since there is a wide geographical spread of placements London, Essex and Kent. Currently meetings are held in south London, Kent, West Sussex, East and West London. A foster carer support and training group was observed during the Inspection. Groups were noted to engage in experiential learning, had a strong element of peer support and great advocacy on the rights of the child.</p> <p>Foster carer feedback was given in relation to recent social activities, which had been a great success. This has included a Caribbean Day. Foster carers feedback was generally positive. The main thing foster carers would like was more social activities. The agency exceeds in relation to supporting carers however it is recommended that foster carers views are listened to. The agency should consider providing additional social activities for foster carers and children.</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?****2**

The agency must ensure that link workers/supervising social workers meet regularly with foster carers. During the inspection a case was highlighted where visits had not been undertaken. Meetings must have a clear purpose and provide the opportunity to supervise the foster carers' work. Records evidenced that occasional unannounced visits are undertaken.

Information about the procedures to deal with investigations into allegations is made known to foster care staff, carers and children and young people and includes the provision of independent support to the foster carer(s) during an investigation. A recent complaint highlighted that although procedures are in place a simplified summary needs to be available for carers. The agency should produce a clear simple summary, which outlines the investigation of allegations process. The agency should additionally consider amending the foster carer agreement to address this issue.

Records about allegations of abuse are kept and monitored and there is a clear policy framework, which outlines the circumstances in which a carer should be removed from the foster carer register. During this inspection this process was examined and was found to be fairly adhered to.

**Standard 23 (23.1 - 23.9)**

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

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

The Registered Manager and Responsible Individual confirmed that all foster carers have attended their new mandatory 6 day Core Foster Carer Training Course over the past year. This training follows the NVQ Level 3 in Foster Care and covers the following modules:

Time For Children's Policies and Procedures  
Safe & Healthy Caring  
Confidentiality & Managing Change  
Valuing Diversity & Promoting Self-Esteem  
Managing Challenging Behaviour  
Promoting Contact and Developing Resilience

Documentation evidenced that the agency additionally have an induction day for new or prospective foster carers. Existing foster carers are involved in induction training.

Once they have completed the Induction and Core training programmes, all Time for Children Foster Carers are expected to attend on-going training six times per year. These training groups are run by the Area Link Worker and include external training input every other session, based on the requirements identified by the agency.

Foster carers benefit from the ongoing bi-monthly support training. Support training is delivered in regional groups e.g. South London, Kent. This training provides the opportunity to discuss current fostering experience and issues, to receive advice and guidance from their social work Link Worker and receive an update from the agency on any policies or

procedures.

Foster carers are encouraged to pursue courses to address their individual interests and needs. Evidence was seen of foster carers receiving accredited counselling training, first aid, All Time For Children foster carers are members of the Fostering Network and are encouraged to take part in their courses. Some foster Carers have also registered locally on the NVQ Level 3 in Foster Care, paid for by the agency.

The agency demonstrated a commitment to supporting male foster carers. Eight males were sponsored to attend a specific 'Men in Foster Care' Fostering Network course in October 2003.

The Responsible Individual related that the agency is able to purchase individual books for foster carers. Examples were given of when this had occurred.

Specific consideration should be given to any help or support needed by the sons and daughters of foster 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?

2

It was noted that in randomly sampled foster carer and children's files, up to date records were not consistently available. It was of concern that the records for young people and carers were not accurate due to the absence of information at the time of Inspection and this was clearly identified to the manager. Not all records were maintained in a form that could be easily passed on if a child moved to another placement.

The teleworking arrangement and desire to have a paperless system was presented as explanation for the recording weakness. The agency must maintain and keep up to date case files. Consistent recording practices are needed. The agency should consider a standardisation and the developing of a centralised access to files database and appropriate templates.

### Standard 25 (25.1 - 25.13)

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

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

3

Administrative records inspected included staff, carers, children and complaints files. Comments regarding children and foster carers files are covered under Standard 24 above.

The confidentiality of records was seen to be maintained at all times, and satisfactory systems were in place to preserve this.

<b>Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:</b>			75
<b>Number of placements made by the agency in the last 12 months:</b>			42
<b>Number of placements made by the agency which ended in the past 12 months:</b>			12
<b>Number of new foster carers approved during the last 12 months:</b>			35
<b>Number of foster carers who left the agency during the last 12 months:</b>			3
<b>Current weekly payments to foster parents per child:</b>		<b>Maximum £</b>	
<b>Minimum £</b>	366		366

## 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
<p>The premises used as offices by the fostering provider are suitable for the purpose. The premises is located in a terraced house and presents as a family home. The offices are located in close proximity to Mile End underground station and is accessible on the Central and District Line. The area is well served by several bus routes and a range of amenities. Restricted and metered parking is in operation.</p> <p>The premises have facilities for the secure retention of records and an appropriate security system. Records are securely stored in filing cabinets. Records are securely stored in filing cabinets. The premises and its contents are adequately insured.</p> <p>The agency is committed to teleworking. The majority of staff work from home. Staff are provided with an equipped base from which they work. All staff are networked and communicate by email regularly. Staff are provided with hands free mobile phones, computers and printers.</p> <p>The agency was found to have adequate administrative systems, including IT and communication systems. Administrative support is provided from the premises during office hours.</p> <p>The premises has a good range of facilities which include three contact rooms, a main meeting room, fitted kitchen, a garden with a canopy and a child safe lawn covering. Pictures displayed throughout the house were culturally reflective.</p> <p>At the time of inspection the building was undergoing refurbishment. The current building work does not affect the service offered. It was also good to see the agency making child friendly and focused alterations to improve the service offered.</p>		

## 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?

4

The Directors report and business plan indicate that the agency is financially viable. The Financial Director was interviewed during the Inspection and explained that they worked within the framework of the agency being a family. Financial decisions were therefore in the child's best interests.

The agency is commended for their ability to respond financially to children's individual needs. This has included financial supporting young people in their areas of interests, purchasing a bike for all children, funding swimming lessons, holidays, computers and social activities. The agency are able to give birth children a financial gift on their birthdays and Christmas. In addition to plans to build savings for each child placed in agency.

The Financial Director explained that profits are redirected back into the agency. The main aim being to provide a quality service for best value.

Procedure exist to manage situations of financial crisis, such as disclosing information to purchases and liaising with them to safeguard the welfare of young people receiving services through the agency. Regulations and guidelines imposed upon businesses are conformed to.

### Standard 28 (28.1 - 28.7)

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

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

3

The agency employs an independent accountancy firm. The Financial Director described the accountants as "excellent". The Financial Director monitors all expenditure. The Financial director has a stock brokerage background and their position is unsalaried.

Appropriate management systems are in operation. The service has financial arrangements for control and supervision of its financial affairs and powers. Budgets and other related records were available for inspection and are regularly monitored and reviewed.

**Standard 29 (29.1 - 29.2)**

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

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

Foster carers reported that they were paid promptly and there were no issues concerning payments.

Settling in payments can be made for items immediately needed for placements. Necessary equipment is additionally purchased for carers.e.g car seats. The agency has a selection of pushchairs and car seats in storage. Discretionary loans are also available to meet children's needs.

The agency has an agreed allowance for foster carers. Foster carers requested that written confirmation concerning payments and allowances are available on approval. Carers additionally requested a breakdown of allowances and for the anonymisation of children on payment statements when sharing information with banks. The Registered Manager explained that letters can and have been written by the agency to confirm foster carer's finances. Foster carers therefore should not have to provide statements to banks.

The agency should clearly provide a breakdown of payments and allowances on approval, confirm the criteria for discretionary payments and clarify the payment policy regarding retainers.



## Fostering Panels

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

### Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.9)

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

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

3

Observation of the foster panel evidenced that good quality and fair 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. The panel is constituted in line with Regulation 24, and its meetings are quorate as required by Regulation 25, Fostering Regulations 2002.

The panel demonstrated an awareness of its roles and responsibilities and all panel members contributed and promoted pertinent child focused discussion. Panel membership was culturally reflective, however there was a lack of male representation. The Decision Maker explained there are plans to appoint another male.

The fostering panel has access to medical, legal and child care expertise. The majority of panel members are independent and includes members who has personal experience of fostering, extensive social care, child advocacy and youth work experience.

The panel has an Independent Chair who has over 30 years experience in the social care and legal field. The Panel Chair evidenced constructive direction, an awareness of cultural matters and current issues in foster care.

Panel was found to operate with great autonomy and independence. This extends to responding as a Panel to a complainant. A strong quality assurance function informs agency practice. Panel policies and procedures have been developed and are in accordance with Regulations.

Panel members have requested that they may attend a future Foster Carer training and support groups, to give them an opportunity to meet with some foster carers and gain an insight into the running of the agency. This will take place at either September or November foster carer training.

Time for Children's Panel has a commitment to training at least annually (sometimes more) and the Panel itself identifies training. This year the training covered revisiting the Panel policies and terms of reference and focused on their expectations of Form F assessors for the agency.

The agency should consider further joint training between panel members and agency social workers. In addition to inviting prospective foster carers to attend panel.



## Short-Term Breaks

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- When foster care is provided as a short-term break for a child, the arrangement recognises that the parents remain the main carers for the child.

### Standard 31 (31.1 - 31.2)

Where a fostering service provides short-term breaks for children in foster care, they have policies and procedures, implemented in practice, to meet the particular needs of children receiving short-term breaks.

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

This standard is not applicable as Time for Children does not provide a short-term break service.
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

## Family and Friends as Carers

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

### Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.4)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	9
This standard is not applicable to Time for Children.		

**PART C**

**LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY**

**(where applicable)**

**Lay Assessor**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_

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

We would welcome comments on the content of this report relating to the Inspection conducted on 20<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> September 2004 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

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

Amendments to the report were necessary

☐

Comments were received from the provider

☐

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

☐

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

☐

**Note:**

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

**D.2 Please provide the Commission with a written Action Plan by 5<sup>th</sup> November 2004, which indicates how statutory requirements and recommendations are to be addressed and stating a clear timescale for completion. This will be kept on file and made available on request.**

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

Action plan was required

☐

Action plan was received at the point of publication

☐

Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion

☐

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

☐

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

☐

Other: <enter details here>

☐

**Public reports**

It should be noted that all CSCI inspection reports are public documents. Reports on children's homes are only obtainable on personal application to CSCI offices.

### D.3 PROVIDER'S AGREEMENT

**Registered Person's or responsible Local Authority Manager's statement of agreement/comments: Please complete the relevant section that applies.**

**D.3.1 I \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_**  
**confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation**  
**of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above date(s) and that**  
**I agree with the statutory requirements made and will seek to comply with**  
**these.**

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature**

### Designation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Or**

**D.3.2 I \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_**  
**am unable to confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above date(s) for the following reasons:**

--

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature**

### Designation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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



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